

Radiology

CT - 48-hour low dose oral preparation

Read this leaflet carefully to make sure you successfully prepare for the examination. You need to begin preparation for the examination 2 days before your appointment.

Points to remember

- If you are over 71 years of age, make sure that you have had a blood test within the past 3 months as we need to know your renal function.
- Please bring any sprays or inhalers that you are taking with you to your appointment.
- **Arrive in the department 15 minutes before your appointment time** so that we have time to go through your safety questionnaire and get you appropriately changed for your examination.
- If you are taking medicine prescribed by your doctor, continue to take it as normal.
- If you are unable to attend, please contact the department using the number on your appointment letter.
- Leave any valuable possessions at home.
- Contact the radiology department immediately if you have a colostomy, ileostomy, or jejunostomy (stoma). You may need a different test that has different preparation instructions to this one.

Information for patients with renal impairment (GFR less than 60ml/min)

- If you are taking **metformin** (also called **Glucophage**, **Glucovance**,



Patient Information

Duformin, Orabet or Glucamet) tablets, continue to take these as normal until the time of your examination.

- You need to stop taking metformin tablets for 48 hours after the radiological test. This is to avoid build-up of acid in the blood after the injection of contrast agent given as part of the CT investigation. Stopping the tablets temporarily will not cause any harm to you.
 - Contact your GP or specialist nurse if you have any concerns, or to arrange alternative medicine if needed.
- **If you are taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)** stop taking them for 24 hours on the day of your examination. You may use paracetamol as a substitute pain relief medicine during this time.

Information for patients with renal impairment (GFR less than 30ml/min)

Please contact the radiology department immediately. We'll need to arrange for you to go to Ward 50 before and after your examination to have intravenous fluids administered.

Please expect to be in the hospital for most of the day.

Safety

Please complete the enclosed CT safety questionnaire. Give it to the CT staff when you attend for your examination.

What is a CT scan

A CT scan is an X-ray examination that gives much more information than a normal X-ray. It produces detailed cross-sectional images of your organs and blood vessels.

The examination is performed by a radiographer, who will be assisted by a radiology department assistant. The procedure may take up to 30 minutes. The images will be reported at a later time by a radiologist (a specialist X-ray doctor).

Patient Information

Iodine

The contrast agent contains iodine and is removed from your body (excreted) by the kidneys in your urine.

Please contact the radiology department immediately if:

- you are allergic to iodine,
- you have reacted previously to the injection used in X-ray to show your kidneys, blood vessels (angiography) or for CT scanning.
- you have severe renal impairment (**GFR less than 30ml/min**) and **are not** on dialysis treatment

Pregnancy

If there is any chance you may be pregnant, let the radiographer performing the scan know. The scan may need to be cancelled, rearranged or an alternative examination being untaken.

- The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child. You'll be asked to confirm you are not pregnant before an examination can proceed.
- To make sure there is no possibility you are pregnant, have your examination within the first 10 days of the start of your menstrual cycle.
- If you are outside of this window, we ask that you read and complete a Confirmation – 'I am not pregnant' form.
- If you have any doubt, take a pregnancy test to confirm.
- If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the CT department on 024 7696 6952 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Ask to speak to the bookings clerk in advance of your appointment date.

Risks

X-rays are a type of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground.

Patient Information

Exposure to X-rays carries a small risk, but your doctor feels that this risk is outweighed by the benefits of having the test. We will take all safeguards to minimise the X-rays you receive.

- The radiological contrast you drink before coming to hospital is needed so we can distinguish between faecal residue and soft tissue on the CT images. It sometimes causes diarrhoea, so you may need easy access to a toilet after you have taken it.
- It's rare but possible that you may have an allergic reaction to the oral contrast you drink at home. The reaction may be a mild skin rash which can be treated with a mild antihistamine. In very rare circumstances it may cause a more severe reaction such as breathing difficulties when you will need to call an emergency doctor.
 - Do not take the second dose of oral contrast if you have an allergic reaction to the first.
- You may have an allergic reaction from the injection of contrast agent used during the examination. You will be asked about allergies by the radiologist or radiographer at the time.

Preparation

You should have received a single bottle of radiological contrast. This is a colourless liquid radiological contrast agent which you drink as part of your preparation over the **48 hours** before your appointment time.

If you follow a fluid restricted diet, include this preparation as part of your fluid allowance. Please inform the CT radiographer before they begin your examination.

1. Drink a dessert spoon (15ml) diluted in a glass of water or squash 48 hours before your appointment time.
2. Drink a second dessert spoon (15ml) diluted in a glass of water or squash 24 hours before your appointment.
3. **Do not eat anything for 4 hours before your appointment.** If you are diabetic, contact your diabetic specialist nurse if you have any concerns.
4. Drink a third dessert spoon (15ml) in 600ml of water or squash 1½ hours before your appointment time.

Patient Information

Dispose of the remaining contrast left in the bottle as you would normally dispose of medicines.

Before the examination

- When you arrive at the Radiology/X-Ray Department, report to the reception desk. You'll be directed to the CT/MRI department reception and waiting area.
- We'll ask you to undress and put on a suitable gown. Please feel free to bring your own dressing gown.
- A member of the CT staff will go through your answers to the enclosed safety questionnaire with you.

During the examination

- You will be taken into the X-ray room. We'll explain the examination to you and answer any questions that you have.
- You will be asked to lie still on your back on the X-ray table. If you need an injection of contrast agent, a small tube (cannula) will be placed by the radiographer into a vein in your arm ready for the injection.
- You will then be asked to raise your arms above your head and the table will be moved into the scanner. The scanner is open at both ends (it is not a long tunnel).
- You will be asked to hold your breath whilst a short 'scout' scan is taken; this takes a couple of seconds.
- There will be a few minutes delay whilst the radiographer programmes the full scan. You will then be given the injection of contrast agent which may make you feel quite warm or flushed.
- After a short delay you will be asked to hold your breath again for the full scan. If you have any difficulties holding your breath, tell the CT staff before you have the injection.
- Once the scan is complete, you will be assisted back to the changing rooms.

Iodinated contrast media

Iodinated contrast media is a clear liquid that is injected into a vein. The contrast media acts like a 'dye' and helps to show up any problems in the organs of the body.

The dye allows the radiology doctors to distinguish between normal and abnormal structures. It improves the visibility of specific organs, blood vessels and tissues. This allows doctors to form their diagnosis easier.

The contrast media can make you feel as if you are experiencing a warm flush sensation. It can also leave a metallic taste in your mouth, which can last up to a few minutes.

Side effects of ionised contrast media

After the administration of contrast media, you may experience side effects. These can vary from patient to patient. The radiographer performing the scan will go through a CT questionnaire form to identify any risks before the examination.

Most patients do not suffer from any side effects following the administration of the iodinated contrast media. Examples of side effects include feeling sick (nausea) and vomiting.

Severe adverse reactions to iodinated contrast media are very uncommon. Radiology Departments are equipped to deal with these.

Most often side-effects/reactions would occur shortly after the contrast had been administered. Most reactions are mild - seek medical attention if the reaction progresses.

A small percentage of patients may have a delayed reaction. This is most commonly a rash, which may happen hours to days after the examination.

Patient Information

Contrast-induced nephropathy

- People with impaired kidney function are at risk of deterioration in kidney function after iodinated contrast administration.
- All people over 70 years need to have a blood test to check their kidney function before they have a CT scan. The CT scan must be performed within 3 months of the blood test being done.
- Ask your referring clinician (consultant or GP) for a blood test form. Failure to get this blood test will result in the cancellation of your scan and it will be rescheduled.
- If you have mildly impaired kidney function, it may be possible to have the contrast media. You may need to have some extra fluids before and after the scan. The hospital will advise you if this is needed.

After the examination

You will be given an aftercare information sheet by the CT staff; please ask for one if it is not offered to you. If you have any problems after the examination please see your GP.

If you have not had an injection of contrast agent:

- You may get dressed and go home immediately after the scan.
- You should feel no aftereffects from the procedure.
- You can eat and drink as usual after the examination.

If you have had an injection of contrast medium:

- We'll ask you to remain in the CT department for 15 to 30 minutes. Then the tube is removed from your arm and you can go home. You can get dressed whilst you wait.
- You can eat and drink normally after the examination. Drink at least one pint of liquid within 2 hours after your examination.

Contact the radiology department immediately if you have severe renal impairment (a GFR below 30ml/min) and are not on dialysis.

You'll need to return to Renal Day Case Unit to monitor your renal function.

Patient Information

Results

The results are not given to you immediately. They are sent to the doctor who referred you for this examination.

More information

- For general information about radiology departments, visit www.goingfora.com
- For information about the effects of X-rays read the NRPB publication: “X-rays how safe are they?” on the Health Protection Agency website: www.hpa.org.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, contact the telephone number on your appointment letter. We will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smokefree policy.

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