

Can you eat and drink afterwards?

Yes.

When will you get the results?

Shortly after your visit the radiologist will examine your CT scan and prepare a report on the findings. This may take some time to reach your referring doctor, but this is normally within 14 days.

If you have a query?

If you have a query about having the CT scan, please ring the CT appointments officer on the number shown on your appointment letter between 9am and 5 pm Monday to Friday.

We are pleased that we can offer state of the art technology for diagnosis. However, radiology equipment needs constant updating and there is a charitable fund for this. If you would like to make a donation, please send a cheque to the appropriate address below. Cheques are payable to GHNHSFT.

Please send your donation to:
Administration Manager
Dept of Radiology,
Cheltenham General Hospital,
Sandford Road,
Cheltenham.
GL53 7AN.

Adult Patients Having a CT Scan of the Head or Sinuses

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What is a CT Scan?

A CT (Computed Tomography) scanner is an x-ray machine which produces an image of a cross-section, or slice, of the body. The scanner consists of a “doughnut” shaped structure, or gantry, about two feet thick, through which you pass on a couch. A narrow fan-shaped beam of x-rays is produced from inside the gantry, and rotates in a complete circle around you. The x-rays pass through your body and are detected by electronic sensors on the other side of the gantry. The information passes to a computer which then produces a picture of the internal structure of the body. The pictures are displayed on a TV screen and can be examined by the radiologist.

It takes less than a second to produce each slice, which can vary in thickness from one millimetre to one centimetre. Depending on how much of the body is being scanned, it will be necessary to produce images of up to 1000 slices, or even much higher numbers with some scanners. Most modern CT scanners can do this in less than a minute so the actual scanning time is short.

Are there any risks?

CT scanning does involve x-rays, and so has the usual risks associated with ionising radiation.

Female patients who are or might be pregnant must inform a member of staff in advance. The amount of radiation is equal to the natural radiation we all receive from the atmosphere over a period of approximately three years. This adds very slightly to the risk of, for example, developing a cancer. However, as one in three of us will develop a cancer at some stage during our lives, the added risk is very small, and also the risks from missing a serious disorder by not having a CT scan are considerably greater.

Are you required to make any special preparations?

No.

Can you bring a relative or a friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety, they cannot accompany you into the CT scanning room.

When you arrive

It is important to inform the Department if you are pregnant, or even if there is a chance that you might be pregnant. Similarly, you should point out if you have diabetes, asthma or any allergies. You will be required to remove earrings and necklaces.

Who will you see?

You will be cared for by a small team including a radiologist and a radiographer.

What happens during the CT scan?

You will be taken to the scanning room and made comfortable lying on the couch with your head supported in a holder. The couch will be moved slowly to position your head within the “doughnut”. The radiographers will move to the adjoining control room but you will be able to talk to them via an intercom and they will be observing you all the time. During the scan you may be asked to keep still.

Will it be uncomfortable?

No.

How long will it take?

The scanning process will take about 10 minutes.

Are there any side effects?

No.