Computed tomography (CT) scanning

Patient information

Your appointment details
This information can be found on the accompanying letter. Please note the hospital you need to attend.

To avoid delays to yourself or to other patients, it is very important that you arrive punctually at the time shown on your appointment letter.

Where will the scan take place?
Crawley Hospital – The CT department can be found in the diagnostic imaging department (X-ray) on the ground floor, behind the lifts of the main reception.

East Surrey Hospital – The CT is located in the diagnostic imaging department, which can be found on the ground floor, closest to the main entrance.

What is CT scanning?
CT scanning is a technique using X-rays and a computer to produce a series of cross-sectional images or slices of the internal structure of the body. The scanner consists of a ‘doughnut-shaped’ structure or gantry with a hole in the centre, through which the patient moves.

What happens during the scan?
You will be asked to lie on a couch, which moves through the scanner. Depending on the type of scan you are having, you may be asked to hold your breath during the scan.
Is there any preparation needed?
Check where you are having your scan.

Please read this leaflet and the instructions below carefully.

For CT of the head, sinuses, spine, bones and joints, mastoids (ears), chest (high resolution CT):

- No preparation is required but please remove earrings and necklaces

For all other body parts:

- Do not eat anything solid for four hours prior to the examination, unless you are diabetic
- Drink fluids as you normally would
- If we are scanning your abdomen and/or pelvis, you will be asked to drink water when you arrive
- You will be asked to undress for the scan (all valuables should be kept with you at all times)
- Asthmatic patients - you need to bring your puffers with you when you attend. Failure to bring your puffers may lead to your appointment being postponed

If possible, we ask you not to bring small children with you, unless you have someone to look after them.

Will I have an injection?
This depends on the type of scan you are having. Sometimes it is necessary to highlight the anatomy on the scan with an X-ray dye, and this is achieved by injecting a contrast dye via a cannula (needle) in the arm or hand. If we know that you require an injection you will be sent an IV questionnaire with your appointment letter and it is important that it is filled our prior to you attending for your appointment.

There may be occasions where a decision is made by the radiologist (X-ray doctor), on the day, for an injection of the dye to be given to help the doctor to interpret the images.

How long will it take?
This really depends on which part of the body we are scanning. Most examinations take between 10 and 30 minutes. For those patients who are given a drink, and/or have an injection, they will be in the department for at least 2 hours.

If as part of your examination you have an injection of contrast, we will leave the cannula in for a further 15-20 minutes after the injection as a precaution. It will be removed after this time and you will be free to leave providing you have not experienced any adverse reaction.

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How do I obtain my results?
The results of your scan port will be sent to the doctor who requested your examination and they will discuss it with you at your next appointment.

Further information
If you need to cancel, change your appointment or have any concerns/queries about your examination, please contact the CT department on: 01737 768511 x1442 or x1444 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Directions, parking and travel information for East Surrey Hospital and Crawley Hospital is available on our website at www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/finding-us/

Contact us
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Diagnostic imaging department
East Surrey Hospital
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

Lead radiology nurse
Tel: 01737 768 511 x6018
www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Telephone: 01737 231 958
Email: pals@sash.nhs.uk
Write to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

You can also ask a member of staff to contact PALS on your behalf.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats, including in larger text. Contact: 01737 231 958 for help.

Author: Imaging Diagnostics
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