

**Patient
Information**

Adult patients having a CT scan of the head or sinuses

If you do not believe you should have been referred for this procedure please contact the CT department immediately.

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about having a Computed Tomography (CT) scan of the head or sinuses. It explains how the procedure is carried out and some of the possible risks.

What is a CT scan?

A CT (Computed Tomography) scanner is an X-ray machine which produces images of the body. The scanner consists of a “doughnut” shaped structure, or gantry, about 2 feet thick, through which you pass on a couch.



Figure 1: CT Scanner

A narrow fan-shaped beam of X-rays is produced from inside the gantry and rotates in a complete circle around you.

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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 monitor (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. The amount of radiation is equal to the natural radiation we all receive from the atmosphere over a period of about 3 years. This adds very slightly to the risk of, for example, developing a cancer. Macmillan Cancer Support predict that 1 in 3 of us will develop a cancer at some stage during our lives, so this added risk is very small. Female patients who are or might be pregnant must tell a member of staff before the CT scan takes place.

Are there any special preparations?

Please remove any items of jewellery from your head and neck before attending for your appointment.

We are unable to offer secure facilities for safe storage of valuables in the department.

Can you bring a relative or a friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety, they cannot join you in the CT scanning room.

**Patient
Information****When you arrive**

It is important to let a member of the team know if you are pregnant, or even if there is a chance that you might be pregnant. You should also let a member of the team know if you have diabetes, asthma or any allergies. You will be asked to remove earrings and necklaces if worn.

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, they will be observing you during the scan. You may be asked to keep still.

Commonly asked questions**Will it be uncomfortable?**

No.

How long will it take?

The scanning process will take about 10 minutes.

Are there any side effects?

No.

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. These will be sent to your referring doctor.

**Patient
Information****If you have any concerns**

If you have any concerns about having the CT scan, please contact the CT appointments officer on the number shown on your appointment letter. Call can be made between 9:00am and 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

If you do not believe you should have been referred for this procedure please contact the CT department immediately.

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 address below. Cheques should be made payable to GHNHSFT.

Business Manager
Dept of Radiology (Imaging 1)
Gloucester Royal Hospital,
London Road
Gloucester
GL1 1NN

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