

Contact the Radiology Department on (04) 806 2193 immediately if:

- **You have had a recent similar imaging (CT scan) done in any other hospital or private practice**
- **There is a possibility you may be pregnant**
- **You are breast feeding**
- **You have had a previous allergic reaction to the x-ray contrast**

Computed Tomography (CT) Scanning uses a combination of x-rays and high powered computers to obtain cross sectional images inside your head or body. The CT scan is carried out by a Medical Radiation Technologist (MRT) and a diagnosis is made by a Radiologist, who is a specialist x-ray doctor.

What happens during a CT scan?

A CT scanner is a large square machine with a circular hole, sometimes described as looking like a “donut”, with a table attached.

The MRT will ask you to lie on the table. The table will move into the donut section of the scanner.

You will be required to remain still and you may be asked to hold your breath while the scan is underway.

For some scans we may need to give you an injection of contrast media (x-ray dye). This is a colourless liquid injected through a needle placed in a vein usually in your arm or hand.

Contrast media helps us to highlight areas of your body better, especially soft tissue structures and blood vessels.

Is there any preparation for the procedure?

Your appointment letter will explain what preparation is required. **Please let us know immediately if you have had a recent similar imaging (CT scan) done in any other hospital or private practice.**

Please follow these instructions carefully and contact Radiology if you have any questions.

As the CT scanner uses x-rays, women should always inform their doctor or the MRT if there is any possibility that they are pregnant or breast feeding before their scan. All females between the ages of 11 and 60 years will be asked if there is a chance they may be pregnant.

The MRT will take you through some health questions before your scan. We do this to ensure that your scan is safe for you.

If it is felt that the scan or the contrast media places you at risk we will need to discuss this with you and may ask you (or your power of attorney / legal guardian) to sign a consent form.

Can I take my medication?

Please take all of your usual medications.

Can I bring a friend or a relative with me?

Yes, but for safety reasons they will not be able to be with you while the scan is being taken.

How long does the scan take?

For most patients the scan itself will take about 10 minutes but if you have the injection of contrast media you will need to allow one hour for your entire visit.

What happens after the CT scan?

If you do not need contrast media during your scan you will be able to leave the department as soon as your scan is completed.

You can resume your normal diet and activities after the scan.

If you have an injection of contrast media you will be asked to wait in the CT waiting area with a needle in your arm. Staff will check on you within 30 minutes and remove the needle. You will then be able to leave the department. Please do not leave the department with the needle in your arm.

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How do I get the results of my scan?

The result is usually available within three to five working days from the doctor who referred you for the scan or your GP. You need to ensure that you have a follow-up appointment with them as the MRT is not able to give you the results of your scan.

Are the x-rays used in the CT scan harmful?

The health risk from exposure to medical radiation is vastly outweighed by the benefits.

The doctor who referred you for a CT scan has considered this risk and has recommended that you have a CT scan to assist with your diagnosis. Please feel free to ask our staff questions at any time.

More information about the contrast media

Are there any side effects?

The contrast media used is the safest and best tolerated available. People frequently describe a warm / flushed sensation over their body and a metallic taste in their mouth. This is normal and lasts only a few minutes.

Can I have an allergic reaction to Contrast Media?

As with all medications there is a risk of an allergic reaction to the contrast media.

Minor reactions include skin rash, nausea or vomiting. These are temporary and usually need no special treatment.

More serious reactions, although much less likely, may include breathing difficulty, swelling of the throat, or other parts of the body. Trained professionals, emergency equipment and drugs are always available for prompt treatment in response to this type of reaction.

If you have the contrast media injection and you start to notice changes in the way you feel, tell the MRT immediately.

If you have any concerns after leaving the Radiology Department, contact your GP or go to the Emergency Department.

What if I have had a previous serious allergic reaction to X-ray Contrast Media?

Contrast media may not be suitable for you.

Are there any other risks from having the contrast injection?

Very occasionally contrast media can be injected into tissues surrounding the blood vessels rather than into the vein in which the needle was placed. This is rare and generally needs no further treatment.

With some patients the use of Contrast Media can affect kidney function, if you are felt to be at risk this will be discussed with you at the time of your appointment.

Comments/Complaints

If you have any comments or suggestions please tell one of the staff before you leave, or you can contact the Consumer Experience Facilitator (Ph 04 806 0724)

General

There are no lockable facilities in Radiology. We strongly recommend that any valuables are left at home.

Please be aware that CCDHB does not take responsibility for any loss or damage of personal property belonging to patients whilst on CCDHB premises

Top tips

- Oncology patients - if you have difficult access to your veins and previously we have had to refer you elsewhere for the placement of the needle
- If you have the injection of x-ray contrast, please drink plenty of fluids for 24 hours after your scan
- Females – please wear a non -underwire bra if you have one

Contact us

Phone: (04) 806 2193

Hours: 8:30 am - 5pm, Monday to Friday

Fax: (04) 806 0301

Email: radiology.admin@ccdhb.org.nz