



What is a CT scan?

A Computerised Tomography (CT) scan or CAT scan uses x-rays to create detailed cross-sectional images of the body.

CT scanning is an excellent medical tool used to detect a range of disorders and can be used to scan the majority of body parts. In particular, it may be used to diagnose subtle fractures, tumours, tiny kidney stones, strokes and narrowing or blockages of arteries. CT can also be used to look at the lungs, major body organs and bowel.

How does CT work?

CT uses x-rays to measure the relative densities of structures in your body and displays this information as a black and white picture. Structures with very low density such as air in the lungs are displayed as black. Structures with very high density such as bone are displayed as white.

Who does my CT scan and report?

The person who operates the equipment is a Radiographer. They are university trained and accredited with the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR). The person who views and interprets the scans is a doctor specialising in Radiology, known as a Radiologist. The Radiologist will prepare a report for your Health Care Professional.

What should I expect when I have my CT scan?

At the clinic you will be taken to a change room where you will be requested to remove relevant clothing and jewellery and to wear an examination gown provided. All metal objects, such as keys, clips, buttons, coins and mobile phones etc must be removed from the path of the x-ray beam.

You will then be asked to lie on the CT scanning table that will position you within the scanner. You must lie still during the scan as movement will blur the images. A series of planning scans will be performed at the start to localise the area of clinical interest. Following this, the main scan will be performed to obtain images used in diagnosis. This is usually completed within a minute or two, sometimes within several seconds.

Depending on your examination, you may be asked to hold your breath. An injection of x-ray contrast, sometimes called 'dye' may need to be administered through a small plastic tube (cannula) which is generally inserted into either a vein in your arm or the back of your hand. Again, this depends on the examination that is being performed, however as a general rule, this is required for most CT examinations of the neck, chest, abdomen and pelvis.

Contrast

You will be provided with a questionnaire/consent form when you arrive at the Exact Radiology Clinic detailing the risks of the contrast. The contrast will only be administered once you have given your consent to do so, which will need to be formally documented on the questionnaire/ consent form with your signature. If it has been recommended to you by the staff at Exact Radiology Clinics that your scan requires contrast it is because the information obtained during a scan with contrast yields significantly more information. If you do not wish to give your consent for use of contrast, then you will need to discuss the examination with the Radiographer or Radiologist. Once you leave the clinic, you may resume normal activities and diet.



Are there any risks or side effects from my CT?

Your doctor has sent you for this test knowing that the information provided by the scan is more beneficial than the very low risk associated with it. The skill of the operator and the design of the machine ensures you receive the lowest radiation dose possible. Female patients who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant must advise the staff prior to the examination, as a CT scan is usually not performed during pregnancy unless it is an absolute medical necessity to do so.

There is a small risk of adverse reaction following injection of x-ray contrast. This would normally be evident while you are still in the clinic and would be treated appropriately by the Radiologist.

How do I prepare for my CT scan?

Preparation for a CT examination can vary, such as fasting for 2 hours prior to your scheduled appointment time or taking some medication prior to the scan. This is dependent upon the body part being scanned. When you phone to arrange your appointment one of our friendly staff will advise you of the preparation and requirements. They may ask questions relating to previous injections and clinical history regarding asthma, allergies and diabetes.

Things to bring along to my appointment:

- Previous films for area of clinical interest.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card (as we bulk bill all eligible Medicare services).
- Referral (this is a legal requirement)
- Workcover details and claim number (if this is a Workcover claim).

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