



Diagnostic Imaging

COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY CARDIAC CT SCAN

Introduction

Your cardiac CT scan will be carried out in the Diagnostic Imaging (x-ray) department at Dorset County Hospital.

Please read this leaflet carefully. It explains what will happen and why, and we hope it will answer some of the questions you may have.

Where to find us

Dorset County Hospital is on Williams Avenue, Dorchester. Use the entrance S1 (South Wing, Level 1) for the Diagnostic Imaging Department.

Parking is available in the hospital grounds. The car park is Pay & Display but can be very busy, so please allow plenty of time.

What is a CT scan?

A CT scan is a type of x-ray. CT stands for Computed Tomography and simply refers to the technology in the equipment.

You lie on a narrow table which passes through a circular hole in the middle of the machine. A fan shaped beam of x-rays passes through a “slice” of your body onto a bank of detectors. The x-ray source and detectors rotate around inside the machine. An image of the slice is formed by a computer and displayed on a TV monitor. The scanner will take the images when your heart is still so we can clearly see all of the anatomy.

Although all CT scans involve the use of ionising radiation, every effort is made to keep doses as low as reasonably possible.

However, should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the referring doctor or the CT department on 01305 255397.



You must inform the staff if you are, or think you may be, pregnant.

The day of the examination

Please follow the instructions on your appointment letter. You will need to undress for your scan and wear a hospital gown. You are welcome to bring your own dressing gown. One of the team will ask you some questions and position some ECG stickers onto your chest.

Please arrive 30 minutes before your appointment time to allow for this.

- Try to avoid wearing jewellery, as this will need to be removed if it is within the area we are scanning
- You must not consume caffeine (tea, coffee, chocolate or energy drinks) for four hours before your heart scan. This is important as caffeine stimulates your heart
- You must not smoke for four hours before your scan
- If you are taking medication, please continue to do so, but the use of Viagra on the day of your scan is contraindicated (you should not use it). If you suffer from asthma, please bring your medication with you
- Please be aware that we cannot look after children during your scan, so please arrange childcare
- If for any reason you choose to not come for this scan, PLEASE let us know so we can use the space for someone else.

Will I need to have an injection?

You will need an injection as part of your scan. CT is used to look at areas where no natural contrast exists. The radiographer will give you an injection of a contrast medium, called Omnipaque. It contains iodine which shows up on the images and is **not** radioactive. This has the effect of creating artificial contrast which clearly shows up in the arteries of your heart. The contrast may give you a hot sensation as it goes round your body, but this passes very quickly.

Will it be painful?

You will feel nothing from the scan itself. You will be able to return to normal activity following your scan. The scan will only take around 10 minutes to complete, but after your scan you will be asked to wait with us for a few minutes.

Who does the scan?

The person who carries out the scan is called a radiographer. He or she will explain the process to you and show you how to position yourself. You will have some ECG stickers put on your chest to record your heart rhythm. If your heart rate is high, you may be given a drug called a beta blocker to reduce it for the scan. You will probably be given a small GTN tablet to help visualise your arteries better, but the doctor will explain this to you before the scan.

It is very important that you stay still for the whole time whilst the scans are being taken. You will also be asked to hold your breath for some of the time. The radiographer or assistant will make sure you are comfortable afterwards and ready to go home.

After the scan

Please do not ask the radiographer for information about your scan. Your scan will be examined by a radiologist and cardiologist, who will interpret the pictures (there may be more than 1000 images) and send a report to the doctor who asked for your examination to be done. The dye injection may cause you to experience a warm feeling all over, or perhaps a metallic taste in your mouth, but other side effects are rare. You should not operate machinery or drive for one hour.

If any of the following symptoms develop you should return to the CT department or visit your GP:

- Feeling wheezy and short of breath
- Tightness or pains in your chest
- Skin rash or itchy spots
- Dizziness or fever.

Finally

We sometimes act as a demonstration site for Canon Medical who manufactures our CT scanner. This arrangement benefits you, the patient, as it means that our scanners are “state of the art” with many software packages that we would not have otherwise. Sometimes, however, this means that we have guests visiting from other hospitals, including doctors and radiographers, who may be interested in upgrading to similar technology at their own site. In the case that they may be present on the day you visit us, please let a staff member know if you would prefer your scan not to be observed. We also use a third party to analyse the images for research purposes - your data will be removed before any images are sent away. Please let us know if you prefer for this not to happen.

We hope that you have found this leaflet useful. If you have any questions, or you are worried about anything, please contact your family doctor (GP), or the CT department on 01305 255397.

You can also contact NHS 111 24 hours a day on 111 or visit www.111.nhs.uk

About this leaflet:

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email

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