

Kent Oncology Centre

Radiotherapy Planning CT Scan

Information for patients

This leaflet tells you about the procedure known as a Computed Tomography scan or CT scan, it explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not intended to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

After you have read this leaflet please write down any questions or concerns you may have. Bring this with you when you come into hospital, and we will answer these questions when we see you. If you cannot attend the appointment or require advice before coming to the hospital, please ring the hospital using the contact numbers on the back page.

What is a CT scan?

CT scanning is a technique that uses x-rays to produce thin section pictures of the body. The CT scanner is a big ring (like a doughnut) and has a table that lifts up and goes through the hole in the middle. It is not a tunnel and does not cover your whole body. The room is bright and airy and has to be kept cool for the equipment, however blankets will be provided to keep you warm during the scan.

Why do I need a CT scan?

Your Oncologist has decided that this type of scan will provide information to help plan your radiotherapy treatment.

Are there any risks or complications?

- **Radiation dose:** Like X-rays the CT scan involves radiation but this is taken into consideration by your consultant who considers that this is an appropriate scan in order to plan your treatment. If you are **pregnant or could possibly be pregnant** please contact the department
- **Allergic reactions:** If your scan requires the use of contrast (dye) injected into a vein, there is a small risk that you may have an allergic reaction. It may cause nausea, a skin rash and/or swelling and in the most severe cases breathing difficulties and collapse, however, you will be asked questions in the department before the scan to help us assess and minimise the risk.
- **Extravasation:** Occasionally when the contrast (dye) is injected through the cannula some of the contrast enters the tissues instead of staying in the vein. This can cause swelling, redness, discomfort and can be painful. It is therefore important that you let staff know immediately if you experience pain in your arm during your scan. If this does occur the application of icepacks is generally all that is required. The swelling will resolve in a day or so depending on the amount of contrast that entered the tissues and you will be given information and further advice before you go home.

Is any special preparation required?

The preparation varies depending on the examination required. Please **see the specific preparation instructions** received with your appointment letter.

If you are **asthmatic** please **bring your inhalers** with you.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

When you arrive in the Radiotherapy Department you will:

- Meet a radiographer who will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have.
- Fill out our patient pre-procedure questionnaire (patients having contrast (dye) only).
- Change into a gown if required.
- Depending on the type of scan requested you may have a cannula (needle) put into a vein in your arm ready for the x-ray dye used for the procedure.
- Wait to be called into the scanning room. Please check with staff before using the toilet as some examinations require a full bladder.

What will happen during the procedure?

You will be asked to lie down on the scanning table/bed. If you have a cannula in your arm it will be attached by a long tube to the machine that injects the contrast (dye) during the scan.

You will need to lie still. If you are having a contrast injection, it is normal to feel a hot flush around your body. It can also feel like you are passing urine (do not worry - it is only a feeling).

Some people also experience a metallic taste in the back of the throat. The scan will be completed in about 10 minutes and you can be seen and heard at all times, so you can always ask for assistance if you need it.

What happens afterwards?

- You may get dressed again into your own clothes.
 - After 20 minutes the cannula will be removed from your arm
 - We recommend that you remain in the hospital for an hour following an injection of contrast and most patients are ready for a drink and food at this point before going home.
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Further information and advice can also be obtained from

Maidstone Hospital	 01622 225080
Kent & Canterbury Hospital	 01227 783010
NHS 111	 111
NHS Choices online	www.nhs.uk

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the PALS Team. We will do our best to arrange this.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

PALS Maidstone Hospital	 01622 224960
PALS Tunbridge Wells Hospital	 01892 632953
PALS Email	mtwpals@nhs.net
PALS SMS	 07747 782317
PALS Maidstone Fax	 01622 224843
PALS Tunbridge Wells Fax	 01892 632954
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