

CT radiotherapy planning scan with contrast

Cancer Services

Information for patients



Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a CT (computed tomography) radiotherapy planning scan with contrast agent. It explains the benefits and risks of the procedure, as well as what you can expect when you come to the hospital.

What is a CT scan?

A CT scan is an X-ray examination that gives more information than a normal X-ray.

What is a contrast agent?

The contrast agent is injected into a cannula (a fine plastic tube) in your hand or arm. It is a colourless liquid that shows up on X-rays, allowing us to see your blood vessels during the scan and providing clearer pictures for your doctor to plan your radiotherapy treatment.

The contrast agent contains iodine which will pass through the bloodstream and will be removed from the blood by the kidneys and liver.

Using contrast does not usually cause any problems for patients; however, some people can experience side effects either during the injection or shortly afterwards.

What is a contrast agent? (continued)

During the injection, you may experience one or more of the following:

- A general sensation of warmth in your body
- A metallic taste in your mouth
- A feeling of emptying your bladder (even though you are not)

These effects are quite common and safe and will pass off quickly.

Occasionally, some side effects are noticed after the contrast has been given:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- Skin rash

Occasionally during the injection, some of the contrast liquid can leak into the tissues around the injection site. If this happens you may experience some pain or discomfort during the injection at the cannula site and there may also be some swelling. Although this does not happen for every injection, it is not uncommon and we will give you appropriate aftercare advice if this happens.

After the CT scan has been carried out, we will ask you to stay in the department to ensure there are no after effects from the contrast. This could be for up to 30 minutes and will be discussed with you after the scan.

We advise you to increase your fluid intake for a few days following the contrast scan.

Please inform the radiographers or a member of staff immediately if you experience any symptoms following the injection, in particular breathing difficulties and/ or rash. Allergic reactions have been reported in association with contrast agents but occur very rarely.

Why do I need a CT scan with contrast?

It gives the doctors enhanced images that they will use to plan your radiotherapy treatment.

How can I prepare?

There are no special preparation instructions to be followed at home before attending for the CT planning scan and you can eat and drink normally beforehand.

Any preparation required will be discussed with you and carried out when you attend for your appointment.

If you are on medication from your doctor please continue to take it as normal. Please bring any medication that you are taking with you, including any sprays or inhalers.

What happens before my planning scan?

You may need to have a blood test before attending for the scan. If this is the case, a blood form will be sent to you with your appointment letter. You will need to have this blood test done at your GP surgery.

You will receive a health screening questionnaire either with your appointment letter or when you attend for your appointment which we will ask you to fill out. We will discuss the contrast procedure and go through the questionnaire with you when you attend for your appointment.

It is very important that you complete the health screening questionnaire and inform us of any allergies you have.

What happens before my planning scan?

Please tell the radiographers on arrival:

- If you have previously had a reaction to a contrast agent.
- If you are allergic to iodine, have any other allergies or suffer from asthma.
- If you have diabetes and currently take metformin.
- If you are on renal dialysis, have problems with your kidneys or are seeing a kidney specialist.

Information for diabetic patients

If you are diabetic and are taking metformin tablets (also called Glucophage, Glucovance, Duformin, Orabet or Gulcamet), we would usually advise you to take these as normal. Sometimes, however, you may need to stop taking these tablets for a short period after the scan - if this required we will discuss this with you when you attend for your appointment.

If you are on insulin or other diabetic treatment, there is no need to make any changes.

Where do I go for my appointment?

You will need to come to the Radiotherapy Department on the ground floor of the Osborne Building at the Leicester Royal Infirmary for your planning scan.

If you are having your head and neck treated, you will attend the mould room before your scan to have a special mask (sometimes called a mould) made. The Mould Room is within the Radiotherapy Department and this procedure takes about 30 minutes. You will then need to wear the mask for your CT planning scan.

What happens during the CT scan?

On arrival, you will be taken to the CT scanner room where the procedure will be explained to you.

You will be carefully positioned on the scanner table in the position that you will be lying in for your radiotherapy treatment. It is important that you are comfortable and are able to lie still - please tell the radiographers if you do not think this will be possible.

A cannula will be put into your hand or arm ready for the injection of the contrast agent.

Pen marks may be placed on your skin and then, with your permission, we may make a very tiny permanent skin mark with ink (a tattoo). The couch will move slowly through the open scanner. You will not feel anything and nothing will touch you. You will be asked to breathe normally and keep as still as possible. The CT scan will take a few minutes but you will be in the examination room approximately 20 minutes.

How long will my appointment take?

The CT scan appointment takes about 20 minutes, but we would advise you to allow a total of two hours for this appointment to allow for any preparation that may be required. You may wish to bring something to eat and drink with you, particularly if you have diabetes.

What if I have problems at home?

If you feel unwell or develop any symptoms once you have left the hospital, including signs of an allergic reaction (for example wheeziness, difficulty in breathing or tightness in your chest, skin rash, lumps, itchy spots, swelling of your face, dizziness or feeling faint), you must contact your GP or local accident and emergency (A&E) department and tell them that you have had an “iv contrast CT scan”.

What happens after the scan?

The scan will be used to plan your radiotherapy treatment. This can be quite a complex process and may take up to four weeks.

After you have had your CT planning scan, you will be given your first treatment appointment before you leave the department. When you attend for your first treatment, you will then be given a list of the rest of your treatment appointments.

If you have any queries about your next appointment or require an ambulance please telephone the radiotherapy appointments office

Telephone: 0116 258 5640.

What are the alternatives?

Sometimes it is not possible to use the contrast injection for medical reasons, or if access to your veins is not successful. In this situation, the CT scan will be performed without contrast after discussion with your doctor.

Additional information

Relatives and escorts

You may wish to bring a friend or relative to accompany you when you have your CT scan, although they will not be allowed into the examination room.

Transport

Hospital car parking is available in the Visitors' Car Park on Havelock Street. Spaces are limited so please allow plenty of time to find a car parking space.

Car parking charges apply.

Bus services to the hospital

Phone Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 for times and routes. A Hospital Hopper bus links the three Leicester hospitals, Beaumont Leys Centre, Hamilton Centre and the railway station. Buses run between approximately 6:30 am and 9:00 pm.

A charge is payable for this service.

Macmillan Information and Support Centre

Osborne Building
Leicester Royal Infirmary
Leicester
LE1 5WW

Telephone: 0116 258 6189
(Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 4.30 pm)
Website: www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/cancerinfo

Health information is available at www.nhs.uk or call **111**
for non-emergency medical advice



Leicester's Hospitals is a research active trust so you may find research is happening on your ward or in your clinic.

To find out more about the benefits of research and become involved yourself, speak to your clinician or nurse, call **0116 258 8351** or visit www.leicestersresearch.nhs.uk/patient-and-public-involvement

For maps and information about visiting
Leicester's Hospitals visit
www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another language or
format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone the
number below or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ دوسرے ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો.

0116 250 2959

To give feedback on this leaflet contact
InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

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