

# Your referral for a CT or ultrasound scan to look at the mass/swelling in your abdomen

Radiology Department

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

Your GP has referred you for a rapid-access CT or ultrasound scan. This is to look at the mass or swelling in your tummy (abdomen). A doctor who specialises in X-rays and scans (a radiologist) in the Radiology Department will decide which scan you will have.

You will get a letter or phone call to tell you which scan you will be having. It will tell you the date and time of your appointment. This will be within 14 days. Your appointment can be at any hospital site. Please check which hospital you must go to for your appointment.

## What is a CT scan or ultrasound scan?

Both scans give detailed images of your organs.

- **A CT scan** is an X-ray test that gives much more information than a normal X-ray. It produces detailed images of your organs and blood vessels. The CT scanner is a large ring shape. It is a bit like a giant polo mint.
- **An ultrasound scan** is a painless test. It uses sound waves to create an image of the inside of the body. It can be used to scan some of the organs of the body. We can also scan blood vessels and muscles. The scan uses a small device called a probe. High-frequency sound waves from the probe bounce off different parts of the body. The probe picks up echoes or reflections. The machine turns them into an image on the screen.

## What if I need to talk to someone?

**If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment:**

Please call the Radiology department on **0116 258 8765** and select **option 6**. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, but not on bank holidays.

Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit [www.uhleicester.nhs.uk](http://www.uhleicester.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

## How do I get ready for my scan?

- It is very important that you follow any preparation instructions given to you.
- Medicines prescribed by your doctor should be taken as usual.
- Please bring with you any sprays, inhalers or angina tablets that you are taking.
- If you have diabetes please speak to your normal diabetes care provider about any eating / drinking instructions you may be given. Please tell the staff on arrival if you have diabetes.

### For CT scan appointments only:

- We may ask you to drink up to 1 litre of water before your scan. This may take up to 1 hour. We will tell you when we book your appointment if this is needed.
- If there is any chance that you may be pregnant, please contact the Radiology Department as soon as you get this letter. We may need to rebook your appointment. If you do not do this, we may not be able to do your scan when you come.

## Important information for patients having a CT scan

You may need to have an injection of contrast liquid during your CT scan. The contrast liquid has iodine in. Your kidneys remove iodine from your body. It comes out in your pee (urine). If you have kidney dialysis, this will remove the iodine.

### Please tell the X-ray staff when you arrive if:

- **You are allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, or have any other allergies or have asthma.
- **You have had a reaction in the past to a contrast liquid injected into a vein (intravenous contrast)**. This is the dye used for kidney X-rays, CT scanning and X-rays of your heart and blood vessels.
- **You are on kidney dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys.**

## Who will be doing the scan?

- **CT scan:** a radiographer or assistant practitioner who specialises in CT scans will do the CT scan.
- **Ultrasound scan:** a doctor or radiographer who specialises in ultrasound scans (a radiologist or a sonographer) will do the scan.
- **For either CT or ultrasound scan:** there may also be a radiology assistant in the room. A student may also be in the room. If you do not want this, you can ask that a student is not there when you have your scan.

## How long will it take?

The time will vary for each patient.

- **A CT scan** can take between 10 and 30 minutes. You may need to drink water for up to an hour before the scan.
- **An ultrasound scan** can take between 10 and 30 minutes.

## What happens during the scan?

When you get to the Radiology Department we will show you to the relevant waiting area.

### For a CT scan:

We may ask you to drink some water. We will tell you if you need to do this and how much to drink. We may ask you to change into a hospital gown.

You may need to have an injection of a contrast liquid (a colourless liquid that shows up on X-rays and CT scans). This is to show your blood vessels on the scan. The supervising doctor will decide this before your scan. We will tell you if this is needed. If you need to have contrast, we will put a small plastic needle (cannula) into a vein in your arm before your scan.

We will take you into the scan room. We will ask your name, where you live and your date of birth. We may ask you to sign a form to confirm you are not pregnant. You may ask any questions that you have. You will be asked to lie still on the scan table.

We will ask you to hold your breath a few times during your scan. We will tell you over the intercom when to do this. If you have any problems lying flat or holding your breath for a short time (up to 20 seconds) please tell the staff on arrival.

### For an ultrasound scan:

We may ask you to change into a hospital gown. We will take you into the scan room. We will ask your name, where you live and your date of birth. You may ask any questions that you have.

We put a water-based gel on your skin. We move the ultrasound probe over your tummy (abdomen).

Female patients who are having a scan of their pelvis may need to have an internal scan as well. This often gives more detailed pictures. If an internal scan is needed we will talk to you about it on the day.

## What happens after the scan?

- **After a CT scan** you may need to stay in the Radiology Department for a short time (15 to 30 minutes). This is so we can check you are OK before you go home.
- **After an ultrasound scan** the gel will be wiped off. You can then go home.

You should have no after effects from either scan.

You can eat and drink normally after the scan. You should then be free to return to work/ normal daily life.

## Are there any risks from having a CT scan?

- **Reaction to contrast liquid.** Some patients may be allergic to the contrast liquid. You could get symptoms such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting), or a rash. Any side effects usually happen within 20 minutes. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital, tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you start to get symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call 111.

- **Risks from radiation.** The main risk from exposure to X-rays is a higher risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small.

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Each test that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child. We must ask all patients age 10 to 15 years registered female and all patients aged 16 to 55 years about their periods and/or possibility of being pregnant.

The radiation from the X-rays during a CT scan is equivalent to receiving about 5 years of natural background radiation. The benefits of having this scan are likely to outweigh any possible risks. The risks of not having the scan could be greater. We try to keep your exposure to X-rays as low as possible.

## Are there any risks from having an ultrasound scan?

There are no known risks from having an ultrasound scan.

## How do I get the results?

- You will not get the results right away.
- A member of the radiology patient support team will contact you by phone. This is to talk about any next steps with you. This will happen within 1 week from having the test.
- Your results will go to your GP who sent you for the test. This will be within 1 week of the test.

Please make sure that the hospital has your current phone number and address.

Your report will go on the NHS App after an inbuilt delay. Your GP or hospital doctor may have your report before you. These reports are medically technical reports. They are written for the referrer to help to make a diagnosis and pick treatment options. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your referring clinician.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અસ્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net)