

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

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Your GP has referred you for a rapid-access CT or ultrasound scan to examine 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, the date and time of your appointment. This will be within 14 days. Your appointment can be at any hospital site so 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 examination 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 - a bit like a giant polo mint.
- **An ultrasound scan** is a painless examination that uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of the inside of the body. It can be used to scan some of the organs, blood vessels, muscles or tendons of the body. The scan uses a small device called a probe. High-frequency sound waves from the probe bounce off different parts of the body. The echoes or reflections are picked up by the probe and turned 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 (option 6), Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays.



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

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

How to get ready for your scan

- It is very important that you follow any preparation instructions given to you.
- If you are taking tablets or medicines for any reason, do not stop taking them without first consulting your doctor.
- 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:

- You may be asked to drink up to 1 litre of water before your scan. This may take up to 1 hour. You will be told when your appointment is arranged if this is needed.
- If there is any possibility that you may be pregnant, please contact the Radiology Department as soon as you get this letter. Your appointment may need to be rescheduled. Failure to do so may result in your examination being postponed.

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 contains iodine and is cleared by the kidneys in your wee (urine) or at your routine dialysis if you have dialysis.

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

- **are allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, have any other allergies or have asthma.
- **have had a reaction in the past to an intravenous contrast liquid**, the dye used for kidney X-rays and CT scanning and X-rays of your heart and blood vessels.
- **are on renal 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. As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be present. If you wish, you can ask that a student is not present during your examination.

What happens during the scan?

On arrival at the Radiology Department you will be directed to the relevant waiting area.

For a CT scan:

If you are having a CT scan you may be asked to drink some water. You will be told if you need to do this and how much to drink. You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

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

You will be taken into the scan room where the examination will be explained to you and you may ask any questions that you have. You will be asked to lie still on the scan table.

You will be asked to hold your breath several times during your scan. The person doing your scan 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:

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will be taken into the scan room where the examination will be explained to you and you may ask any questions that you have.

A water-based gel will be placed on your skin and the ultrasound probe will be passed over your tummy (abdomen).

Female patients who are having a scan of their pelvis may need to have an internal scan as well, which will often provide more detail. If an internal scan is needed then it will be explained to you on the day and you will be kept fully informed.

How long will it take?

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

The time will vary for each patient.

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) before you go home.
- **After an ultrasound scan** the gel will be wiped off. You will then be free to go home.

You should have no after effects from either examination.

You can eat and drink normally after the examination. 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 and may have symptoms such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting), or a rash. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital, tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you develop symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call the NHS helpline on 111.
- **Risks from radiation** - the main risk from exposure to X-rays is an increase in the 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, food we eat, and the ground. Each examination gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child so we must ask some patients aged 10 to 55 years about their periods and 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 this examination are likely to outweigh any potential risk and the risk from not having the examination could be greater. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you receive.

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?

The results will not be given to you immediately. There are 2 ways you will receive your results:

1. A member of the radiology patient support team will contact you by phone to discuss any next steps with you. This will happen within 1 week from having the test.
2. You and your GP who sent you for the test will receive a letter explaining what your test showed. This will be within 1 week of the test.

Before you leave. Please make sure that the hospital have your current phone number and address.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય 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 equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk