

Frequently Asked Questions about CT Head Scans

Why should I get a CT Head Scan?

There are many reasons why your doctor may order a CT Head Scan. CT Head Scans are completed to:

- Check symptoms, such as confusion, paralysis, numbness, vision problems, vertigo, or headaches
- Check for problems that may need surgery, or to help plan for surgery.
- Find the cause of a loss of consciousness or a changing level of consciousness.
- Detection of bleeding, brain damage, skull fractures or brain tumour
- Diagnosing diseases which may cause hearing problems

Are there different types of CT Head Scans?

Yes there is a “normal” CT Head Scan and there is a CT Head scan where dye or contrast material is used during the test.

What can I do to prepare for a CT Head Scan?

There is nothing in particular that you need to do before a CT Head Scan without dye. You might like to wear loose clothing to the test. Also you will be asked to remove metal objects from your hair such as clips or any jewellery you might have on. If you are having dye inserted you might need to not eat around 4 hours before the test. Your doctor will give you details before the test.

What do I need to do after a CT Head Scan?

You do not need to do anything specific after a CT Head Scan. You can resume your normal activity as soon as the test is finished. If dye is used however, you may be watched for a time for things such as itching, swelling, rash, or difficulty breathing. You should have also have extra drinks to help get rid of the dye from your body.

Will It Hurt?

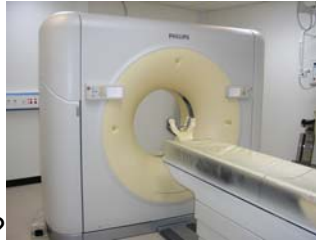
No during a CT head scan without dye you will not feel anything. During a CT head scan with dye you might feel a little sting when the needle is inserted into your arm. If dye is injected into your arm, you may feel warm and flushed and get a metal taste in your mouth. Sometimes, but not often, the dye may make you feel sick, or give you a headache. If you develop these things, tell the radiology technician.

How Long Will It Take?

A CT head scan without dye takes about 30-60 minutes to complete. A CT head scan with dye takes about 60 minutes to complete.

Is there any hospital stay involved in having a CT scan?

No there is no need for a hospital stay when having a CT head scan with or without dye.



What does the equipment look like?

The CT scanner is a large, square machine with a hole in the centre like a doughnut. An x-ray tube moves around your body to produce the images, making clicking and humming noises as it moves.

Will someone be allowed to come in with me during a CT Head Scan?

You will be alone in the room during the scan; but the technologist can see, hear and speak with you. Sometimes a carer may be allowed in the room, but they will need to wear a lead apron.

Will I feel the scan happening?

You will feel not feel anything from the CT scan. The table you lie on may feel hard and the room may be cold because air-conditioning is used. You may become uncomfortable from lying in one position for a long time. Some people feel upset when placed inside the CT scanner. If this keeps you from lying still in the scanner, you may be given medication to help you relax.