

Liver/Abdominal CT Scan

Here are answers to commonly asked questions about a Liver/Abdominal CT Scan. Ask your doctor if you have additional questions or concerns.

What is a Liver/Abdominal CT Scan?

The CT scan is a form of x-ray that creates an image of the inside of the body. The scanner's computer analyses the data to build a view of the tissues and organs of the body. Almost any part of the body can be scanned.

What do I have to do to prepare for the scan?

You will be given detailed instructions about your preparation when you make your appointment. If, the scan is likely to involve an injection of contrast, a fast of two or more hours may be required. You may be required to drink a few cups of a special mixture to make your bowel visible on the scans. Take your usual medication as normal.

What will happen during the CT Scan?

Frequently, a contrast dye is injected into the vein to enhance certain regions of the liver. You will be required to lie on the scanner bed and keep very still. The table will slowly move in and out of the circular opening of the scanner. You may be instructed to hold your breath for a short period of time. The scan is performed by a specialised imaging technologist who can see and hear you at all times and who will assist you.

How long will it take?

The CT scan usually takes 20-30 mins but may take as long as an hour.

Will the CT scan hurt?

It can be uncomfortable having to lie still for up to an hour. During the CT you may be given an injection into a vein. This can sometimes cause discomfort. The injection is a substance called 'contrast' and is based on iodine. It is used to highlight the vessels and organs of the body and greatly assists the radiologist in diagnosing the scans. It is not radioactive.

Any risks associated with the contrast injection will be explained in the questionnaire and information sheet you will receive on arrival for your examination. It is unlikely that you will feel any ill-effects from the contrast injection so you will be able to drive a car and return to your normal duties after your scan. Some people develop an allergic reaction to the contrast injection. If you are aware that you have had an allergic response to contrast dye in the past, or if you are allergic to iodine, you must discuss this with your doctor.