

Computed Tomography

Patient Information

What is Computed Tomography (CT)?

Computed Tomography (CT) is a medical imaging procedure that uses X-rays to create detailed pictures or images in very fine slices. Each picture created during a CT procedure shows organs, bones and other tissues in a thin slice. The entire series of pictures produced in CT is like a loaf of sliced bread. Each slice can be looked at individually or viewed as a whole.

At Radiology Tasmania, you will be scanned on what is known as a multi-slice CT scanner which has the ability of producing up to hundreds of slices that are often less than 1mm thick.

CT is widely used to help diagnose:

- Circulatory system disease and conditions, such as atherosclerosis, aneurysm and blood clots
- Spinal conditions
- Masses and tumors
- Kidney and bladder stones
- Inflammatory diseases, such as ulcerative colitis and sinusitis
- Injuries to head, skeletal system and internal organs.
- Gout, arthritis and fractures of the extremities.

What happens during CT?

Preparation and techniques vary depending on the area being examined. When you make the booking you will be advised of preparation if required.

When you arrive for your examination, you may be asked to complete a health questionnaire.

The radiographer (trained health professional) will call you from the waiting room and you may be asked to change into a patient gown.

You will then be taken into the examination room

where you will see the CT machine. The machine is large and square with a round hole in the middle. This is sometimes described as a donut.

The radiographer will explain what will happen during the scan prior to the examination commencing.

You will then be asked to lie on the scanner table, the table height will then be adjusted and the bed will move in and out of the hole several times while pictures are being taken. It is important to try stay still during the scan, as movement will affect the quality of the images. The radiographer may ask you to hold your breath while the images are being taken, but this will only be for a few seconds.

It is possible you may require an intravenous contrast injection which helps highlight specific areas inside the body resulting in clearer pictures. The radiographer will discuss this with you if required. It is common to experience a strange metallic taste in the mouth and a warm sensation throughout the body when contrast is injected. This warm sensation may concentrate around the groin and buttock area, but the sensation should pass within a couple of minutes. Please see the patient information brochure on CT Contrast Medium for further details.

Scan times vary, but generally take between 5-20 minutes.

A Radiologist (Specialist Doctor) will then assess your pictures and a written report will be sent to your Doctor within 24 hours.

What are the risks of CT ?

Our highly trained staff and specialty equipment ensures that you receive the lowest possible radiation dose to achieve quality images that will allow the Radiologist to make an accurate diagnosis.

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If contrast is used, there is a small risk of allergic reaction. It is not possible to predict if a person will be allergic to the iodinated contrast.

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If contrast is used, there is a small risk of allergic reaction. It is not possible to predict if a person will be allergic to the iodinated contrast. Our staff are well trained to deal with allergic reactions should they arise. It is important that you tell the radiographer of any other allergies that you may have before having the injection.

Please notify the radiographer immediately if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- A skin rash or hives
- Itching
- Sneezing and watering eyes
- Dizziness or headache
- Feeling of swelling or itching inside the mouth or throat.

If these feelings develop after leaving the practice, you should return immediately or attend the nearest doctor or emergency department.