

CT Scan

What is a CT scan?

CT stands for Computed Tomography. CT uses X-rays which are captured by a detector to create detailed slices and 3D imaging of your body, including internal organs, bones and blood vessels. A CT scan shows greater detail compared to standard plain film imaging.

The information from the CT scan will assist your consultant or doctor with your diagnosis or monitor how well treatment is working



Is CT safe?

X-rays are part of a group called 'ionising radiation'. This means they have enough energy to potentially damage the healthy cells in our body.

The risks associated with the use of ionising radiation are carefully considered by clinicians throughout. We abide by special rules so that each scan is justified, and that the benefits of having the scan outweigh the risks.

With every scan that we take, we do our best to keep the amount of radiation to a minimum, and the amount of radiation received varies depending on the type of imaging

CT scan with contrast

Your doctor may request that your CT scan needs contrast.

The contrast is also known as a 'dye' which is used to highlight blood vessels and organs to better highlight conditions such as lesions, infection or blood vessel pathology.

The contrast is a clear fluid. It is not radioactive or absorbed by the body. As the contrast does not have a use in

your body this means your kidneys will filter the dye and it will pass through your urine. As the contrast is a clear fluid, you will not notice when it passes

what happens during the scan?

The CT scanner at QVH has a wide width gantry (hole) and is short in length. You will lay on the table which will move in and out of the scanner. Most scans take less than 10 minutes.

A radiographer will perform your scan.

They will go through pre-examinations questions and talk to you through what will happen during your scan. The radiographer will monitor you throughout the scan, and is able to talk to you through an intercom.

If you require contrast, a small cannula will be inserted into a vein in your arm

What happens after the scan?

Your images will be interpreted and a report will be written by a radiologist. This report will contain your results and will be sent to your referring doctor.

If you have received an injection of contrast, you will be advised to wait in the department for a further 15 minutes. After that, you will be able to resume all daily activities or go back to work as usual



Please ask if you would like this leaflet in a
different format.

Radiology Department
Issue 5 – Ref. No: 0596
Approved by the Patient Information Review Group
Print: December 2025 – Review: December 2028

www.qvh.nhs.uk

© Copyright QVH NHS Foundation Trust