

# C.T Scans

A C.T is an x-ray examination where a special machine consisting of a flat table passes through a doughnut shaped ring in which multiple x-rays are taken at different angles to provide a more detailed image. The patient lies on the table for the scan but no other part of the scanner touches the patient. The images produced are a cross-section through the part of the body being examined, rather like slices of bread. Each 'slice' gives excellent detail of the organs in that area (brain, kidney, liver, spine, etc).<sup>(see figure 1)</sup>

The scan is performed by a radiographer (medical imaging specialist) and a radiologist (a doctor trained in the reading of x-rays).

The CT scan does not necessarily replace normal x-rays but it does provide useful additional information.

## Preparation

Depending on the area being examined, you may be required to fast for some time prior to the examination. If the scan is of your abdomen, you may be required to drink a special fluid to outline the bowel: this will require you attend one hour prior to the examination.

If you suffer from asthma, severe allergies, diabetes or any other similar condition, please tell the booking staff as you may require medication prior to your scan. Any preparation you may require will be explained in detail at the time your booking is made.

## Procedure

You will be asked to lie on the table, and because of the need to maintain the correct position for some time you may need cloth bands around your head, body or legs to help you keep still. These bands are not painfully tight and shouldn't restrict your circulation. You may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds during the scan.

You may also need an injection of contrast or 'x-ray dye' into a vein (usually on the inside of the elbow) to help show up certain body organs. Please advise the booking staff or nurse if you have had a previous reaction to this contrast.

The radiographer is in the next room at the control console and communicates with you by microphone and can see the whole procedure through a window.

## Scan time

The actual examination usually takes less than 30 minutes. However, the computer processing and imaging following the scan takes considerable time. It is suggested you allow at least 2 hours after the examination if you wish to take the films and report with you on the same day. Alternatively, you can collect the films at a later date, or the film and report can be sent directly to your doctor if they accept deliveries.

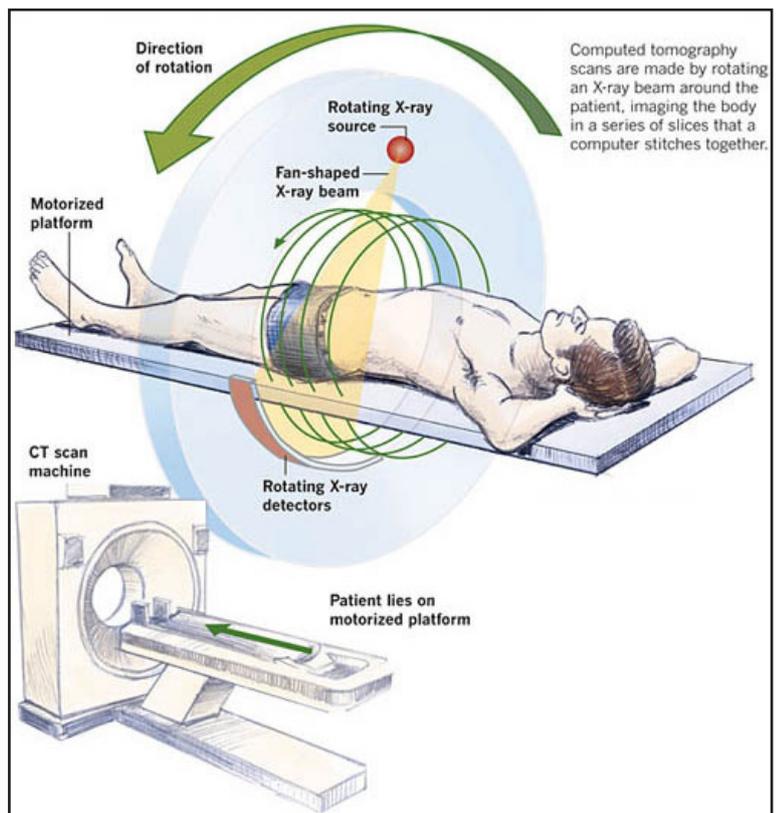


Figure 1; the anatomy of a C.T Scan.