



A lifetime of specialist care

Royal Brompton & Harefield **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Having a cardiac CT scan





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*This leaflet gives general information about having a cardiac CT scan. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask your hospital doctor, nurse or radiographer if you have any questions.*

## What is a CT scan?

A CT (computerised tomography) scan is a special X-ray that allows radiographers to take detailed images of the body.

A cardiac CT scan takes pictures of your heart, coronary arteries (the vessels that supply the heart with blood and oxygen), pulmonary vessels and aorta (the main blood vessel from your heart to the rest of your body). This allows us to get a picture of the structure of your heart and its major blood vessels and valves.

## What are the benefits?

The results of the scan will help your doctor diagnose any health problems you have been experiencing and decide on further treatment for you.

A cardiac CT scan is non-invasive, so there is less risk of complications than other tests.

## Are there any alternatives?

Other tests, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and echo scans, give information on how well your heart is functioning, but do not give as much information about your anatomy as a cardiac CT scan does.

## What happens if I don't have the scan?

If you don't have the scan, your doctor may not have all the information they need to make a diagnosis. This may affect the type of treatment he or she can suggest for you.



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## How is a CT scan carried out?

A radiographer will ask you to lie on a bed that will move through the scanner. Radiographers are healthcare professionals who use images to diagnose and treat medical conditions and diseases. You will be able to talk to the radiographer through a microphone during the scan. He/she will place electrodes (small sticky patches connected to leads) on your chest. The electrodes are connected to a monitor that records the rhythm and electrical activity of your heart.

We can then trigger the scanner to take a picture at a certain point during your heartbeat. This gives us high-quality pictures of your heart and the blood vessels.

A special dye is then injected into a small vein in your arm so that we can see your heart and blood vessels clearly.

It can be difficult for us to get a clear picture if your heart is beating too quickly. We will check your heart rate when you arrive and if it is faster than the ideal rate, we may give you some medication to slow it down, if this is suitable for you. This may be in the form of a tablet or an injection and can take up to an hour to work. As soon as your heart is beating at the right pace, we will do the scan.

To help us get a clear picture of your heart and blood vessels, we will ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds during the scan. We will discuss this with you before your scan so you know exactly what to do.

The scan takes around 15 minutes. However, you may be with us for over an hour if we have to give you medication as described above.

## What happens after the scan?

The medication to slow down your heart rate can make you feel a bit drowsy for up to a few hours after the scan. Please avoid driving or cycling immediately after your appointment. It is also a good idea to ask someone to come with you to the appointment.

## Female patients

If you are pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, please tell us before the scan. We need to know whether you may be pregnant because the scan involves small amounts of radiation.

If you are having a scan of your pelvis, you must have the scan in the 10 days from the beginning of your last menstrual cycle. This minimises the chance of having the scan during pregnancy. If your menstrual cycle changes, please contact us to change your appointment date.

## If you have diabetes

You do not need to change your diet or treatment. Please contact the CT scanning department if you are taking metformin.

## Medicines

Please continue to take your medicines as normal. If you would like more information about the medication we may give you during your scan, please contact your hospital doctor or nurse, or speak to the radiographer before your appointment.



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## Is there any risk from the radiation?

The amount of radiation used in this scan is kept to a minimum. We believe that the benefits of the scan far outweigh the risk to your health. If you have any concerns about this, please contact the imaging department and a radiographer will call you back and answer your questions.

## Consent (agreement)

We aim to make sure that every patient is fully informed of the risks and benefits of a procedure or treatment. As you are having a complex CT scan, we will ask you to sign a consent form. This records your agreement to have the scan. Please ask if you have any questions about the risks and benefits of the scan.

## Results of the scan

The results of the scan will not be available immediately. They will be sent to the doctor who is looking after you in hospital, who will discuss the results with you at your next clinic appointment, or over the phone if necessary.

## Contacts and cancellations

Please contact us if you have any questions about the procedure.

If you are unable to attend your appointment for any reason, please let us know in advance. We can then give your appointment to another patient and arrange a new appointment for you.

**Harefield Hospital**

01895 828 582

**Royal Brompton Hospital**

020 7351 8220

## Where is the CT scanner?

### Harefield Hospital

There are two scanners at Harefield Hospital. Both are on the ground floor in the main hospital building. Please report to the main reception desk in the X-ray department and you will be directed to the appropriate scanner.

You can see a map of Harefield Hospital on our website here: [www.rbht.nhs.uk/about/locations/harefield-map](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk/about/locations/harefield-map)

### Royal Brompton Hospital

There are two CT scanners at the hospital. Please check your appointment letter to make sure you go to the correct scanner:

- Fulham Wing / South Block in the basement, or
- Sydney Street, Level 3, X-ray department.

You can see a map of Royal Brompton Hospital on our website here: [www.rbht.nhs.uk/about/locations/brompton-map](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk/about/locations/brompton-map)

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If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

- Royal Brompton Hospital – 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital – 01895 826 572

You can also email [pals@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@rbht.nhs.uk). This is a confidential service.

Royal Brompton Hospital  
Sydney Street  
London  
SW3 6NP  
tel: 020 7352 8121  
textphone: (18001) 020 7352 8121

Harefield Hospital  
Hill End Road  
Harefield  
Middlesex  
UB9 6JH  
tel: 01895 823 737  
textphone: (18001) 01895 823 737

Website: [www.rbht.nhs.uk](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk)

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ترجمة فورية لمضمون هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، يرجى منك الاتصال بأحد مستخدمينا بجناح المصلحة التي يتم فيها استشفائك. أحد موظفينا سيسعى لترتيب إجراءات الترجمة وإتمامها في الوقت المناسب لك.

Brosurteki bilginin Türkçe tercumesi için tedavi görüyor olduğunuz bölüme bas vurunuz. Bölüm personeli tercümenin gerçekleşmesini en kısa zamanda ayarlayacaktır.

