



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# CT Colonography

Issued by Radiology Department



# What is a CT Colonography?

CT Colonography is an examination which uses a CT scanner to create 3D images of the large bowel.

CT stands for Computerised Tomography. A CT scanner is a special x-ray machine which produces images of the body in sections. Sensitive detectors gather information as the x-ray beam moves around the body. The computer translates the information into an image which can be viewed in many different ways.

During the scan gas will be used to inflate the bowel via a small flexible tube that will be placed in your back passage. This allows for maximum information to be gained from the scans.

Once you have received your appointment, please telephone **0191 293 2541** if any of the following apply:

- You cannot attend for this appointment.
- You have Diabetes and take the drug Metformin (Glucophage).
- You are, or could be pregnant.
- You are breast-feeding.
- You have difficulty swallowing.
- You have an over-active thyroid or are allergic to iodine.

If you need an ambulance you will need to arrange this with your own GP surgery as soon as possible.

## Are there any side-effects or risks?

Your doctor has decided that it would be beneficial for you to have this x-ray examination. As with most medical procedures there is a small risk associated with this. However the benefits of the examination outweigh these risks.

If you are at all concerned about any part of the examination please do not hesitate to contact the department to discuss with a Radiographer.

Women of child bearing age will be asked if there is a chance of pregnancy. CT examinations are not routinely performed during pregnancy and will be avoided in most circumstances. If you are, or may be, pregnant you should notify a member of staff as soon as possible. In a few cases however the benefits may still outweigh the risks to the unborn child and the examination would go ahead with appropriate radiation protection.

If you are at all concerned about any part of the examination please do not hesitate to contact us prior to the examination or please feel free to ask a member of staff at any time during the CT.

The CT scan produces radiation but as with most modern X-ray equipment the scanner is designed to get the radiation dose as low as possible.

Some CT examinations involve you having an injection of an x-ray dye (iodine based contrast agent) which will be injected into a vein in your arm to increase the amount of information gained from the scan.

When the x-ray dye is injected you may experience a warm feeling, a metallic taste in your mouth and a warm sensation in your groin. These symptoms are common and usually pass within seconds.

Very rarely, as with any injection, some patients can suffer an allergic reaction.

Should you feel unwell after the injection you will be monitored in the department until you feel well enough to leave.

## **Do I need to do anything before my appointment?**

To get a clear view of the bowel it is essential that it is completely empty of faeces.

In order to do this there is an enclosed information sheet along with a bottle of Gastrografin liquid or Omnipaque liquid or a different laxative. **Please follow the enclosed instructions on the information sheet to make the scan as accurate as possible.**

The treatments can make you feel a little sickly and will give you watery diarrhoea. Some patients feel that the first treatment does not have much effect but the second dose works very well. All of the above is normal and nothing to worry about.

## Taking medication

If you are taking iron tablets stop taking them 3 days before your scan, as they can cause slight constipation.

Continue to take any medication prescribed by your doctor unless you are diabetic. If you have diabetes and take Metformin (Glucophage) you may need to stop the Metformin the day of the procedure. This is because the combination of Metformin and x-ray dye may affect the kidneys.

Please contact the X-ray department prior to your appointment. A member of staff can then advise you further. The Radiographer carrying out the examination will give you instructions for restarting your Metformin.

If you have been prescribed any other medication by your GP please take these as normal. **Please bring a list of all medications with you on the day of your examination.**

If you have angina and use a GTN spray or you have asthma and use an inhaler, please bring these with you on the day of your test.

## How long will the scan take?

You should expect to be in the department for up to an hour. The scan takes between 20-30 minutes but you will be required to remain in the department for a short while after the test to make sure you are ok.

## **What happens before the scan?**

When you arrive at the hospital please report to the x-ray reception where a member of staff will book you in and direct you to the CT waiting room.

When it is time for your scan a member of staff will collect you from the waiting room. You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to put on a hospital gown which will be provided. You may wish to bring your own dressing gown and slippers.

## **What happens during the scan?**

You will be taken into the scan room and asked to lie on the couch. Some straps and pillows may be used to help you maintain the correct position.

The Radiographer will ask a series of questions regarding your health and a cannula (needle) will be inserted, usually in your arm or hand.

You will then be required to lie on your left hand side. The radiographer will now insert a small flexible tube into your back passage following a brief examination and secure it into place. Gas (carbon dioxide) will slowly be passed through this tube via a special machine to inflate your bowel.

You may be given an injection of a drug called Buscopan. This drug which relaxes the muscle of the wall of the bowel to stop it from going into spasm (not everyone is able to have this injection). After the injection of Buscopan some patients experience a very dry mouth and some blurred vision. These effects can last for up to 20 minutes.

You should not be in pain during this procedure but may feel slight discomfort and bloating.

Once there is enough carbon dioxide in your bowel you will be asked to lie in different positions, usually on your front and on your back. Other positions (lying on your side) may be used on some occasions.

You will be connected up for the injection (iodine based contrast media) via the cannula inserted earlier. When all the scans are complete the radiographer will then remove the tube from your back passage.

## **What happens after the scan?**

You will be shown the nearest toilet if required. If you choose you can then get dressed. You will be asked to take a seat for a short while to make sure you are well enough to go home following the examination. Staff will provide a cup of tea or coffee if you would like one. The cannula will be removed before you leave the department.

If you drove to the hospital you should be able to drive afterwards if you are feeling well (if you experienced any blurred vision during the procedure, you must not drive until your vision has returned to normal).

After the scan has finished a Radiologist will interpret the images and a report will be sent back to the doctor or consultant who requested the examination. This normally takes up to 10 working days.

## **Can I eat and drink afterwards?**

Yes, you can eat and drink as normal after the scan. It is important that you drink plenty of fluids after the scan to help flush out the x-ray dye. The x-ray dye is colourless and will pass via your urine undetected.

## **What if I have any questions?**

If you have any questions regarding your scan or appointment please feel free to contact the CT team.

North Tyneside General Hospital 0191 293 2596

Wansbeck General Hospital 01670 529 3769

Hexham General Hospital 01434 655022

## Chaperones

The role of the chaperone is to ensure that the privacy, dignity and interests of the patients are supported and protected at all times during the consultation, examination, treatment or delivery of care.

All patients and staff have the right to request a chaperone.

For patients, a chaperone will usually be any trusted adult who they ask to be present during a consultation, examination or when care and treatment are being delivered. In the case of patients who are under the age of 16, this is usually an adult with parental responsibility.

Occasionally the member of staff carrying out the examination may decide that the patient's chaperone should not be present if it is felt that it is in the patient's interests. If this occurs, the member of staff will give you an explanation as to why.

Please be aware that it may not always be possible to provide a staff member as a chaperone outside of normal working hours.

Radiology staff adhere to strict radiation safety guidelines. This means the chaperone may not be able to be next to the patient but may be asked to stand behind a protective screen or asked to wear protective clothing during procedures.

## Contact numbers

For X-ray appointments telephone 0191 2932541

Monday to Friday 9.00am – 7.00pm

Saturday and Sunday 9.00am -12 noon

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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