**HAVING A CT SCAN**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR CT WITH IV & ORAL CONTRAST**

**What is a CT Scan?**

A computed tomography (CT) scan is a specialised type of x-ray which takes very detailed images of the tissues inside your body such as bones, organs and vessels.

**How do I prepare for the CT Scan?**

**Do not eat any solid food for 2 hours before your scan**, but drink plenty of liquids. Diabetics may have a light meal if necessary.

You will need to **arrive 1 hour** before your appointment time when you will be asked to drink about 1 litre of water over a period of time. Sometimes this is diluted with a small amount of an x-ray dye (contrast), called Gastrografin which helps highlight the organs inside your body more clearly. You will also need to change into a gown, remove all metal objects from your body and have a cannula placed into a vein in your arm or hand by one of the radiographers. This is for an injection of some contrast.

**What is Contrast?**

Contrast is mainly composed of an element called iodine which shows up brightly on x-ray images. When you drink this or have it injected into a vein, much more detailed information of the organs and vessels inside your body can be found.

**What happens during the CT Scan?**

You will lie flat on your back with your arms above your head on a bed that passes feet first through the ringed opening of the scanner 3 to 4 times.

The cannula in your vein will be connected to the x-ray dye. You will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds during the scans, and to remain still.

Part way through, the contrast will be injected through the cannula. Some people experience mild and short lived side effects which include a hot flush, metallic taste and the sensation of passing urine. These are all very normal and pass quite quickly. The scan itself will only last about 5-10 minutes.

**What happens after the CT Scan?**

The Radiographer who performs the scan will ensure all the images have been taken and are prepared for review by the Radiologist who will send a report to your referring consultant. The time it takes for this to happen varies but is usually done in less than a week. There are no lasting side effects, but you are encouraged to drink extra fluids on the day of your scan to help your kidneys flush the contrast from your system. You can otherwise eat and drink as normal and it is safe to drive and return to work right away.

**Before having the CT Scan**

Please inform the radiographer if you have any allergies, particularly to iodine or any problems with your kidneys that you are aware of.

Females between the ages of 12-55 years will need to confirm that they are not pregnant before proceeding with the scan.

Unfortunately there are no childcare facilities at the hospital and children cannot come into the scanning room with you.

If you have any concerns, or would like to discuss the scan and procedure with a Radiographer, please do not hesitate to contact the imaging department on **0208 347 3866** or [**diagnostics@highgatehospital.co.uk**](mailto:diagnostics@highgatehospital.co.uk)