**HAVING A CT SCAN**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR CT CORONARY ANGIOGRAM WITH IV CONTRAST**

**What is a CT Scan?**

A computed tomography (CT) scan is a specialised type of x-ray which can take very detailed images of the blood vessels in your heart.

**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 must not exercise or have any caffeine on the day of your scan.** You will need to **arrive 15 minutes** before your appointment time when you may 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 (x-ray dye) which highlights the vessels of your heart providing more detailed images.

**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?**

It may be necessary to give you medication called Beta Blockers to regulate your heart rate so the scanner can take the best images; these are injected through the same cannula in your vein. Another medication called GTN will be sprayed under your tongue, this can cause a mild headache or some light headedness but this usually passes quite quickly. You will be connected to an ECG machine to monitor your heart rate.

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 a number of 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 10-20 minutes, depending on your heart rate.

**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 Cardiac 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. Whilst there are no lasting side effects, you will be offered some time to wait in the waiting room if you wish while any side effects wear off. 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 or sensitivities, particularly to iodine, Beta Blockers or GTN, 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**