**HAVING A CT SCAN**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR CT VIRTUAL COLONOSCOPY 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 large intestine (bowel/colon).

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

**Please read the CT Virtual Colonoscopy Patient Preparation Sheet for the full details on the bowel cleanse and low-fibre diet.**

You will need to **arrive 2 hours** before your appointment time when you will drink a very small amount of x-ray dye (contrast) which will highlight the walls of your bowel in further detail, and assist the radiologist is determining between abnormalities or normal faecal matter. You can drink as much fluids as you wish in this time but must not have any solids until after the scan. You are welcome to stay in the imaging department or return **15 minutes before** the scan time.

You will then 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 providing further detailed images of your organs.

**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?**

Prior to the scan, one of the radiographers or department assistants will ensure the bowel preparation is adequate and that you followed the diet correctly. You will need to sign a consent form for the procedure which will include the risks and benefits of having a virtual colonoscopy. In order to keep your bowel still and to make the examination more comfortable for you, you will be given an injection into the cannula, called Buscopan. This may also relax the muscles in your eyes and heart, so it is important that you let the radiographer know if you, or a family member, have a history of glaucoma, or if you have any heart conditions. You may experience some blurred vision but this should pass before you leave the department.

You will lie on your side with your knees tucked towards your chest. The radiographer will gently insert a very thin and flexible lubricated tube into your rectum (back passage). Once it is inserted, a small balloon is inflated to ensure it stays in place, you may feel some pressure or the sensation you need to pass stool. However, this will not be painful. Some Carbon Dioxide (CO2) gas passes through the tube and fills and expands your large bowel. You may feel some cramping or the sensation of being very full. This is normal, and since we use CO2, your body will absorb this over time.

Once the radiographer is satisfied with the amount of air used, you will lie on your back with your arms raised over your head. The tube will remain in your back passage during the scan. 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. You will then turn over onto your belly and have another scan, this time with no contrast injected into your vein. The scan itself will only last about 15-20 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. 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. Most of the gas we used will be absorbed normally by your body but you should try release as much as you can in our toilet facilities in the department for your own comfort.

**Before having the CT Scan**

Please inform the radiographer if you have any allergies or sensitivities, particularly to iodine, or any problems with your kidneys that you are aware of. It is also important that you tell one of us if you or a family member have glaucoma (a condition affecting the pressure in your eyes), or heart problems such as palpitations.

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**

**Please now read the diet preparation document.**