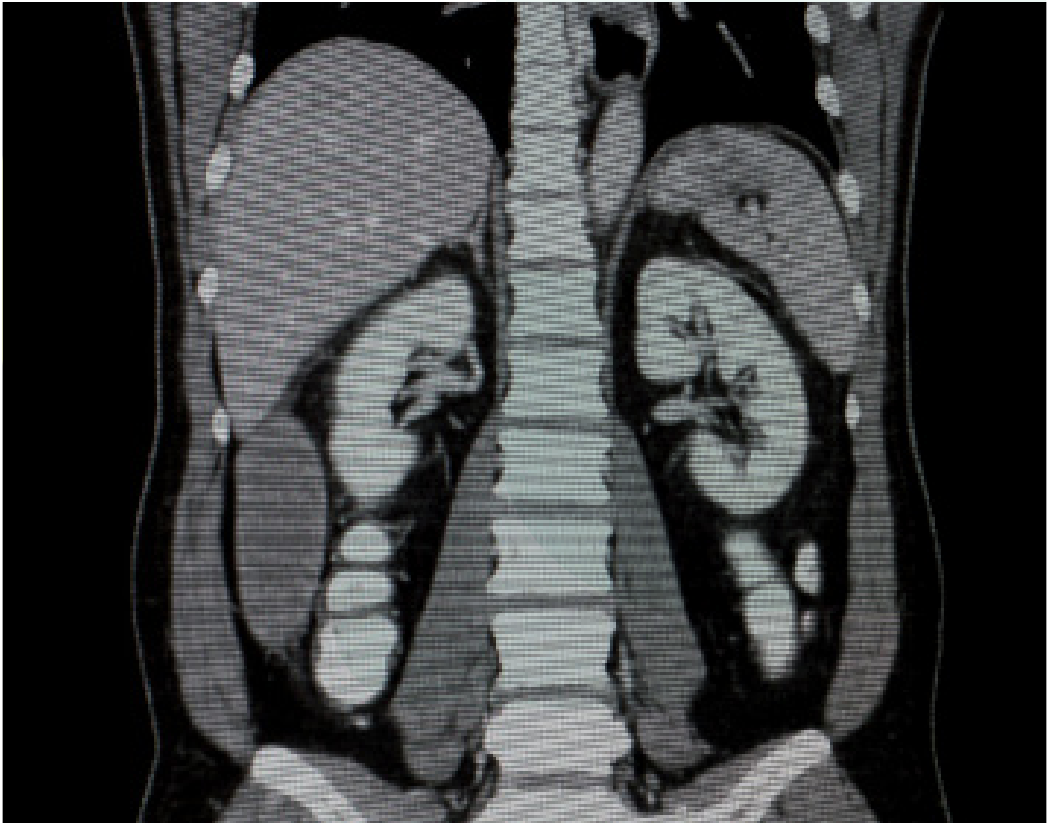


CT-scan

Radiology



AZ JAN PORTAELS
Algemeen Ziekenhuis Vilvoorde

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In order to make our brochures easier to read, we always use the third person singular male "he", regardless of the gender of the subject of the sentence.

What is a CT-scan?

A CT scan, computed tomography scan or CAT-scan is a digital technique that produces virtual cross-sections of the body. The resulting pictures provide a three-dimensional view of the part of the body being examined.

You will be lying on a narrow examination table with a circular opening of 78 cm in diameter. We closely follow technical innovations in order to always use the lowest possible radiation dose.

Preperation

A CT-scan is only carried out by appointment and on the prescription of a doctor. Please check in on time at the Radiology Department desk. In some cases, you will be asked to come one hour before the start of the examination.

- For some CT scans (of vertebrae, limbs, brain, sinuses, ...) no preparation is necessary
- In some cases, if contrast agents must be administered, you will have to fast before the test (see below).
- In case of an examination in the abdominal region, the small intestine must often be photographed. For this purpose, you will have to ingest a contrast medium (i.e. a peroral preparation). This liquid should be drunk in its entirety over the course of about an hour, distributed evenly. During the first half hour following the start of the injection, you will be asked not to urinate as the bladder must remain full for the examination.

Sometimes an enema is also requested in the large intestine (colon): for this purpose, a tube will be placed in the anus to inject the liquid containing the contrast material. In order to retain the enema and avoid cramps as much as possible, you will receive intravenous medication (Buscopan).

- In some CT-scans, the contrast medium can be administered intravenously. For this purpose, a superficial vein in your arm will be pricked, or the contrast medium will be administered via an existing intravenous device (infusion, portacath).

Medication

When taking medication, you may ingest it with a little water, unless your doctor instructs you not to take these medications before the examination.

Fasting

If intravenous contrast is to be administered, you will have to fast for at least 4 hours before the examination begins. For an examination in the abdominal region, you must fast for at least 8 hours. Many examinations can be performed without contrast medium, such as CT-scans of the spine or sinuses. Sometimes the radiologist decides to use a contrast medium during the examination.

Claustrophobia

Claustrophobia, i.e. fear of confined spaces, is uncommon during CT-scans. However, if you are prone to this disorder, do not hesitate to inform your doctor: he may prescribe a sedative.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

As this imaging technique makes use of X-rays, it should be avoided if you are pregnant, especially at the beginning of your pregnancy. It is therefore important to report any possible pregnancy. If you are breastfeeding, you can continue to do so after the CT scan since intravenous contrast material is not harmful to your baby. However, if you have

any concerns, you can stop breastfeeding for 24 hours after taking the product and discard your milk. As a precaution, you can express your milk in order to feed the baby during this interruption.

Relatives and other accompanying persons

Your loved ones and other accompanying persons can wait for you in the waiting room. Only professional escorts and persons accompanying young children are allowed in, taking the necessary precautions. If you are coming for a CT scan and have small children, please make your own childcare arrangements.

How does it work?

After the preparation phase, you will lie on the examination table, usually on your back, sometimes on your stomach - either with your feet or with your head on the side of the scanner opening. While pictures are being taken, the examination table will slide back and forth across the opening of the scanner at the level of the body part being examined. You must remain completely still and sometimes hold your breath for a short time, depending on the examination.

In accordance with radiation protection measures, the radiology nurse will remain outside the room during the entire test. However, you can still contact him at any time.

Some people experience an intense feeling of warmth, starting from the throat and spreading throughout the body, when injected with intravenous contrast media. This feeling disappears quickly. Nausea following the injection of a contrast medium has become less common with the use of newer products.

Aftercare

The enema and peroral contrast material used in a CT-scan of the abdomen may lead to more frequent and watery stools. The medication administered by enema serves to relax the muscles of the intestine and is metabolized by the body in about an hour.

We therefore advise you to go to the toilet before leaving the hospital. You can also stay in the waiting room for a while to avoid a “little incident” on your way back. In order to avoid incontinence problems, you are advised to bring a change of underwear with you. We will provide you with a toilet bag.

Allergy

Contrast media contain iodine, a substance to which some people are hypersensitive or even allergic. However, severe allergic reactions have become rare with the use of newer contrast media.

An allergic reaction to a contrast medium usually takes the form of itching, with red papules (resembling mosquito bites) or swelling of the eyelids; sometimes there can also be a severe reaction, like an oedema in the throat or an allergic shock.

This hypersensitivity is unpredictable, unless it is already known from previous tests. The risk may be higher if the patient already has known allergies to other substances, or suffers from hay fever, eczema or allergic asthma.

If you know of your hypersensitivity to iodine or of any other allergy of yours, please inform the doctor who requested the examination as well as the Radiology Department team.

Your doctor should indicate any relative or absolute contraindications to the administration of a contrast medium (e.g. allergy to iodine, severe renal insufficiency, Kahler’s disease...) on the examination request form.

Possible complications

Due to the high pressure, the vein through which the contrast material is injected may leak or tear, causing the contrast material to enter the tissue around the vein instead of the blood stream: this phenomenon is called extravasation. It often goes along with local pain and swelling. If a problem occurs after the nurse has left the examination room, you can report it via the built-in microphone or by raising your finger, depending on the instructions you have been given.

Even if the vein where the contrast medium was injected has been rinsed with sterile water, it still may become inflamed and clotted (phlebitis) within a few days after the examination, with pain, rash and swelling. If this happens, please contact your family doctor or the specialist.

Report

The images and the radiologist's report are electronically made available to the requesting physician. Only your doctor can discuss the examination results with you.



Conclusion

If you still have questions after reading this information, please do not hesitate to ask your doctor or the nursing staff at AZ Jan Portaels. We will be glad to help you.

We would like to thank you for your cooperation and will do everything in our power to ensure that your examination runs smoothly.

Useful contact details

Radiologie

| T 02 257 51 00
| E radiologie@azjanportaels.be

Website

All patient brochures are available on our website under the tab 'Patient information'.

| www.azjanportaels.be

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