

# About your Child's CT scan under General Anaesthetic (Morning Appointments)

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## What is a CT scan?

CT Stands for computerised tomography. A CT scanner uses x-rays to produce a series of cross sectional images which are obtained through the body and a computer is used to reconstruct the images. This information may help your child's consultant with diagnosis and the planning of their treatment

## Reasons for having a CT scan

The doctor who requests your child's CT scan will discuss with you the reasons for the scan. They will explain the Information they hope to find, and how this will influence your child's subsequent management. In addition they will explain why the CT needs to be done now, rather than waiting until your child is old enough to undergo a CT without a general anaesthetic. They will also discuss why alternative investigations, which would not require a general anaesthetic, would not be appropriate.

## Additional investigations under the same general anaesthetic

If anything else, such as a blood test, needs to be done, the doctor will discuss this with you.

## Information about the diagnosis

This will be discussed with you by your child's paediatrician.

## What does the procedure involve?

The procedure will involve your child keeping completely still inside the scanner (this is why a general anaesthetic is given) while pictures are taken. An injection may be given into a vein to make some parts of the body show up better. The general anaesthetic is described in more detail in the leaflet entitled 'Your Child's General Anaesthetic', which is available from Bramble ward.

## What happens before the scan?

Your child should not eat after midnight on the night before the CT scan. Please encourage your child to drink clear, non-fizzy drinks (e.g. water or squash, **but NOT milk**) until they arrive at the hospital on the day of the scan. If your child is less than 1 year old he/she can have a breast feed which must be finished by 5am, or a bottle feed which must be finished by 3am. He/she will be admitted to Bramble Ward Day Case Unit on the day of the scan. If your child is taking any medicines or inhalers, he/she should take these as usual on the day of the scan.

We expect your child to make a rapid recovery after his/her CT scan under general anaesthetic and to experience no serious problems. However, it is important that you should know about minor problems, which are common after this procedure, and also about more serious problems that can occasionally occur. The next section '*The risks of a general anaesthetic*' describe these, and we would particularly ask you to read this. The headings from this section will also be included in the consent form you will be asked to sign before your child's CT.

## What is a general anaesthetic? What happens after the scan?

A general anaesthetic ensures that your child is unconscious and free of pain during an investigation or operation.

Anaesthetists are specialist doctors who are responsible for the wellbeing of your child throughout the procedure.

### The risks of a general anaesthetic

General anaesthetics are usually very safe. However, there are some risks, which may be increased if your child has a chronic medical condition. In general the risks are as follows:

- **Common temporary side-effects** (risk between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100) include bruising or pain in the area of injections, blurred vision and sickness. These can usually be treated and pass off quickly.
- **Infrequent complications** (risk between 1 in 100 and 1 in 10,000) include temporary breathing difficulties, muscle pains, headaches, damage to teeth, lip or tongue, sore throat and temporary problems speaking.
- **Extremely rare and serious complications** (risk less than 1 in 10,000). These include severe allergic reactions and death, brain damage, kidney and liver failure, lung damage, permanent nerve or blood vessel damage, eye injury, deep vein thrombosis and damage to the voice-box. These are very rare and may depend on whether your child has other serious medical conditions.

You can watch a video of what it's like to go to hospital and have an anaesthetic at

- [www.apagbi.org.uk/children-and-young-people/videos-children](http://www.apagbi.org.uk/children-and-young-people/videos-children)

### How long does a scan take?

Total scanning time is approximately 1 hour.

Your child should recover quickly, and should not experience any pain or discomfort. He/she will be able to drink and eat very soon afterwards.

### Discharge from hospital?

You can take your child home a few hours after the CT scan, on the same day, as long as he/she can drink and is not being sick.

### What should you do if a problem develops?

If you have any concerns before you take your child home, please talk to the nurse looking after him/her.

### Do you need to return to hospital for a check and what will happen to the results?

No you do not need to return to the hospital for a check but you will be seen in the Outpatient Department to discuss the results of the scan.

### Who should you contact in an emergency?

Bramble Blue Ward on Exeter (01392) 402681

### How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information: [www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where](http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where)

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website: [www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/service/medical-imaging](http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/service/medical-imaging)

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