

CT SCAN

Before you start your Radiation Therapy, a CT scan of your body in the treatment position is needed to plan your individualised treatment. Even if you have had other scans, this scan is required to plan your treatment in the correct treatment position.

Most treatment positions involve lying flat on your back, others with your arms above your head, and some lying on your front. The Radiation Therapists will determine a suitable position for the type of treatment you need. Various pieces of positioning equipment will be used.

Clothing needs to be removed around the area scanned (and during treatment), so most patients will be asked to change into a gown.

The Radiation Therapists will draw marks on your skin using a felt pen and take some measurements. All you need to do is find a relaxed position, keep still and breathe normally throughout the appointment.

To operate the CT scanner the Radiation Therapists go into a control room where they can see you throughout the scan. You will pass through the scanner several times as it takes x-ray images used to plan your treatment. Some people find it comfortable to close their eyes during this. No treatment is given at this time.

The felt pen marks on your skin are reference marks for your treatment which are in a different place for each person. It is beneficial to make small permanent dots at some of these points which will not wash off. We call these dots tattoos. A drop of ink is placed on your skin and a pin prick on the area makes the mark permanent. Most people find the dots small and barely noticeable (see photo – right). To assist us finding these marks at treatment and reproduce your position, photos are also taken including a face photo to help us identify you for treatment.

This appointment may take an hour or more. While at CT you may be given an appointment to start treatment, or you may be contacted later.

The CT images taken are used by the Radiation Oncologist to define the exact area to be treated and your individual treatment plan will be designed in consultation with the Radiation Therapists and checked by Medical Physics staff. This may take several hours or days depending on the complexity of your treatment plan.

