

# CT - colonography

## What is a CT scan?

Computed Tomography (CT) is a fast, effective and accurate way of using x-rays to take pictures in very fine slices through the part of the body that the doctor has asked to be investigated.

CT scanners can produce multiple slices of the body in one single rotation and the CT computer is able to stack these slices together to create images in multiple planes. With all of these different slices and 3D reconstructions, the radiologist will have a very detailed picture of the structures making up your body. This will help them to make a diagnosis so that the right treatment can be planned as soon as possible.

## What oral preparation is required?

CT colonography requires the bowel to be completely empty. Therefore, patients are required to complete a bowel preparation. Please contact the CT imaging department for more information regarding the fasting time required and where to purchase the bowel preparation sachets. You can take medications with water during this period as necessary.

## What is involved?

CT colonography examination is often used to enhance images of the large intestines by providing virtual colonoscopy images. Common indications for CT colonography include a failed or incomplete conventional colonoscopy, where colonoscopy is contraindicated due to significant medical conditions, bowel cancer, bowel polyps, diverticular disease, bowel blockages or strictures.

You will be asked to change into a gown prior to your examination. Once in the CT room you will be asked to lie on the CT table, at this point a medication commonly used to help slow down bowel movement, known as Buscopan will be given. This is used to help reduce motion artefact caused by normal bowel peristalsis on the final images. One of our medical imaging nurses will insert a soft flexible catheter into the rectum while the patient lies on their side and is held in place by a small inflatable balloon. Carbon dioxide gas is then slowly delivered into the rectum using a dedicated medical insufflation machine. You may feel mild discomfort and generalised fullness during this process. Once the bowel has fully expanded then CT imaging may begin.

A volume between 1.5 - 3 litres is commonly given under nursing guidance. Patients are asked to try and clench their pelvic muscles in order to hold onto the catheter in order to keep the air safely inside the bowel. In doing so, the best quality imaging can be obtained. Inflation of the large bowel helps to greatly increase the sensitivity of the CT exam. It is important to relax as much as possible until the CT scan is complete.

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The radiographer will position you and the CT table will move in and out of the CT scanner and a series of pictures will be performed. It is very important that you lie still for this test and hold your breath when requested. Normally two sets of images are taken, one with you lying on your back and one with you lying on your stomach. You may be able to lie on your side for the second scan if you have difficulty lying on your stomach. After the exam is complete, the air will be allowed to escape and you may go to the bathroom and get dressed.

## Are there any side effects?

The sensation of your abdomen feeling full should subside once the examination is complete. You can eat as usual afterwards. If you have been given Buscopan, there is a small possibility that your eyesight may be a bit blurry for half an hour and that your mouth may also feel dry. **You should make arrangements to have someone drive you home.**

## How long will my scan take?

Depending on the scans required it takes 30 - 45 minutes.

## How do I get my results?

Digital images are immediately available to your doctor and your records will be kept permanently. This occurs through a system called PACS. **If a priority report is requested it will be issued within two hours and faxed or emailed to your doctor, however this can sometimes take up to 24 hours.**

If your referring doctor wants to see you on the day of your examination, please advise the reception staff when you arrive for your appointment, so the appropriate information can be made available for you to take to your doctor.

## How much will this cost?

Please discuss this with the receptionist in Cabrini Medical Imaging at the time of booking your procedure.

## Important

**It is important to let us know when you make your booking if you are or think you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.**

It is important to bring with you your referral, previous x-rays and any other tests (only if previous ones were **not** done at Cabrini or I-MED).

## Questions

For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Cabrini Medical Imaging using the number below.

