

CT scan of the left atrium

A computed tomography (CT) scanner uses X-rays to take cross-sectional images or image 'slices'. For this reason, the study is not suitable for pregnant women.

The PET/CT scanner has a wide opening (70 cm in diameter), so it can generally be used even for claustrophobic patients. The scanning visit takes about 1 hour including the preliminary steps.

How to prepare

The scan is done with a contrast agent, so a laboratory test to check kidney function (**plasma creatinine**) usually needs to be completed beforehand. If you know you have kidney failure, please contact the facility referring you to the study.

You can eat normally before the study.

Avoid smoking for 6 hours before your appointment (this also applies to other nicotine products).

If you are allergic to X-ray contrast agent, please tell this to the referring doctor and please contact the X-ray department before the day of the examination. Pregnant women do not have this procedure. If you think you may be pregnant, notify the PET Centre before you come in for the study.

Medications

Metformin-medication does not need to be stopped before the procedure. You may take your other medications as usual.

What to expect at your appointment

Every patient is asked to complete an interview form. The scanning procedure will be reviewed with you in advance and a medical technician will help you practice holding your breath for a short time as required for the study.

- You will have an ECG monitor and a cannula (drip) in your forearm vein
- Your heart will be scanned without a contrast agent first, and then with contrast injection. You will need to stay still and follow any instructions you are given for the study to be successful. The radiologic technologist and the physician who is conducting the study will be able to hear you and see you throughout the study.

- The radiographic contrast agent contains iodine and may cause a warm feeling to spread over your body for a moment, and you may also notice a metallic taste in your mouth. This is normal, not an allergic symptom.

After the study

You will not need to stay at the hospital for observation after the study. We recommend drinking more water than usual after the study. This is because the contrast agent is excreted through the kidneys into the bladder and leaves your body through urine, usually without causing side effects. However, if you notice feeling something out of the ordinary, contact the scanning facility or an emergency doctor.

A doctor at the ward or outpatient clinic that referred you will give the study results.

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