If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

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The Christie Patient Information Service
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The Christie at Salford

Information about your radiotherapy planning CT scan

This leaflet explains what happens when you come for a radiotherapy planning (RTP) scan. This is different from a diagnostic CT scan.

What is a planning scan?
An RTP scan uses a CT scanner to produce cross-sectional images or ‘slices’ through the body using x-rays linked to a computer. The scans which are undertaken to plan your radiotherapy are solely aimed to give enough information to plan the radiotherapy accurately. These scans are not diagnostic and therefore do not give sufficient information to assess the status of your cancer or any other abnormalities.

If you have any questions please feel free to ask the radiographer when you arrive or during your appointment.
Before your scan

- Please eat and drink normally. If you do have to starve, we will tell you beforehand. Although we would advise you to make sure that you are well hydrated before and after your scan.
- It is sometimes necessary to give you a special drink of contrast which outlines the areas of interest. The drink is given on arrival, after completing a health questionnaire and will usually take one hour to drink.
- It also may be necessary to see your organs and vessels more clearly. To do this we may have to give you an injection of contrast agent. The radiographer will do this via a cannula in the back of the hand or the arm.
- When you arrive a radiographer will take you into the scan room and explain all about the procedure.
- You will not need to fully undress for the procedure. We will simply separate your clothes over the area we are scanning, or give you a gown to maintain your modesty.
- You can normally go to the toilet as normal. However, sometimes we ask you not to empty your bladder whilst in the department. If this is the case, we will tell you when you arrive.
- If you take regular pain relief, please bring this medication with you in case there are delays in the department.
- Please let the radiographer know if there is any possibility that you may be pregnant.

During your scan

- The scanner is a large ring with a large hole in the middle. The table moves through this hole. The scanner is not a tunnel.
- The radiographers will guide you into the treatment position and draw some marks on your skin using a marker pen. You will usually be asked to lie on your back.
- The table is motorised and it moves slowly up and down through the scanner. These movements are fully controlled by the radiographers.
- During your scan you will not feel or see anything, however the machine makes loud noises similar to a washing machine.
- The best thing you can do throughout your scan is to relax and breathe normally.
- During your scan, you are watched the whole time by the scanning radiographers to make sure that you are ok.
- Your scanning session will usually last between 15-20 minutes; however, the radiographer will let you know if it will take any longer.

After your scan

- With your permission, we will replace the pen marks with small permanent tattoos which will allow you to bathe and shower as normal. The permanent marks are the size of a small freckle. These marks will be used to set you up for your treatment.
- You will receive your first treatment appointment after your scan. It is important that you tell staff if you are going to need hospital transport to get to your future appointments.
- It may be necessary for some patients to see the doctor for consent purposes. We will tell you if this is necessary and when to attend if it is not on the same day as your scan.
- If you have been given a contrast injection we will ask you to remain in the department for 15 to 30 minutes following the scan to ensure that you are feeling ok.
- Please be aware, you could be in the hospital for up to two hours depending on your scan requirements and if you require consent.
- You will be able to drive yourself home.

If you have any questions please contact us on 0161 918 7800 or 0161 918 7787

The Christie at Salford Royal is a smoke free site, this includes electronic cigarettes.