

PATIENT'S INFORMATION NOTE

Dear Sir / Madam _____, as you have been told by the department's Dr _____, in order to continue with the process of diagnosis / treatment of your illness _____ it is necessary to carry out Computerised Axial Tomography (CAT or CT).

We will give you some information that will help you make an informed decision.




What is it?

Computerized Axial Tomography (CAT) is a test that uses x-rays (like those used in x-rays) which allows seeing the examined parts of the body on a computer.

What is it for?

The CT scan is a "second level" examination; that is one which is used to clear doubts of some importance when the simpler diagnostic tests (X-rays, ultrasound) did not lead to an accurate diagnosis. Any area of the body can be examined (head, neck, chest, abdomen, limbs).

The CT scan is particularly suitable for diagnosing: inflammatory diseases, neoplasms (tumours), brain pathologies (ischemia, haemorrhage, trauma, tumours), disc hernias, and the study of severe trauma patients.

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Compared with a simple x-ray, the CT scan allows differentiating accurately the density of various tissues of the human body, however, it exposes the patient to a greater amount of radiation and is therefore indicated when there is a true diagnostic doubt. Based on diagnosis requirements it is often necessary to use a contrast medium given by injection into a vein (see specific information note).

How is it done?

You will be lying on a hard bed, which rises and falls and slips inside the CT unit, which looks like a large but not too thick "donut with a hole". The donut can lean towards the bed, but there are safety devices that prevent it from doing any harm to the patient. After you are lying down, in order to obtain good quality images we recommend remaining still for the entire duration of the test. In the study of the chest and abdomen you must raise your arms above your head, and hold your breath during the exam, the exam can be split into several parts so that you can catch your breath. The position of the patient is quite comfortable, except for the study of the knee, in this case the leg which is not examined must be placed outside the "donut". Running this test does not usually cause any discomfort even to claustrophobic (fear of closed places) patients, since the spaces are very large.

You will not be left alone, however, as the technical staff and the doctor can see through a large window and can talk to you and listen through the intercom.


The duration of the examination, with the new equipment is on average from 3 to 20 minutes, according to the number and types of tests that must be performed.

What are the possible problems during and/or after the treatment?

The test is completely painless, the only feeling that you may have is linked to the injection of iodinated contrast medium, often a feeling of spread warmth, possibly feeling the need to urinate, very rarely a metallic taste in the mouth and a slight feeling of nausea, these sensations usually disappear within a couple of minutes.

What are the possible complications?

The CT scan is a safe procedure, however, there are a few possible complications related to the contrast medium (see specific information note)

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Recovery problems

Once you have finished the exam you can safely resume your normal activities. If you were given the contrast medium, drinking at least 1 litre of water during the day is recommended in order to facilitate its elimination.

Focus points

It is important that you follow the instructions given in the **exam preparation form**. For some tests (e.g. knee, un-treated lumbar hernia, dental-scan, etc.) you do not need any preparation.

This test must not be taken during pregnancy, except in some specific cases that will be evaluated with your doctor.

Although the exam is quick, it requires the cooperation of the patient who has to stay still while doing the exam.

It must be remembered that since it is an examination with high doses of ionizing radiation, **it should be done only if it is essential for accurate diagnosis and for therapy.**

If the CT scan was done with the injection of iodinated contrast medium, the thyroid scan will not be significant for some months.

Are there any alternatives to the treatment/procedure?



An alternative to a CT scan is MRI

Possible outcomes of non-treatment

Should you not want to undergo a CT scan, we wish to inform you that assessment of your disease will be more difficult. Your doctor may prescribe other alternative exams.

If the information received does not seem clear or if you need more information, ask for a further in-depth interview with the doctor.

It may be helpful to make a list of questions you want to ask the doctors and, if you like, to be accompanied by a family member (or other person of your choice) to the interview.

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It is your right to ask for explanations as it is important to be aware of how the treatment will be carried out and what the consequences will be for you.

If you are not going to be able to decide right away, you can always ask for more time for reflection.

Give your informed consent to the execution of the examination consciously and freely, knowing that you have the possibility to withdraw your consent at any given time.

In case of refusal, you will still have continuity of care by personnel and of the therapies identified by the physician among those available in our hospital or at other facilities.

Benelli dr. Giampaolo
X-Ray Unit Manager

Handwritten signature replaced by the printed indication of the name of the subject in charge in terms of article 3(2) of Legislative Decree No. 39/1993".

Information prepared by the Operational Unit of Radiology which ensures its periodic review at least every three years.