Information for patients requiring a CT guided drainage
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This information leaflet has been produced to give you general information and hopes to answer most of your questions when requiring a CT Guided Drainage. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your healthcare team, but may act as a starting point for discussion. If after reading it you have concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with a member of the healthcare team.

Please contact us prior to your scan if:

- You have diabetes and are taking Metformin
- You are, or might be, pregnant
- You weigh more than 200kg or 31 stone

What is a CT Guided Drainage?

You have had previous tests which have shown an abnormal collection of fluid inside your body. There are different reasons to remove this fluid. For instance,

- to find out what it is,
- to find out what is causing it,
- to find out if it is infected
- if it is causing discomfort

Using a CT scanner, which is a specialised x-ray machine that produces detailed pictures of the inside of your body, a tube or drain is carefully inserted through your skin into the fluid. This allows the fluid to drain and be removed from your body. The CT scanner is an open ring-like structure which resembles a giant doughnut. It is not a tunnel as some people might expect.

How should I prepare for my CT Guided Drainage?

Please do not eat for four hours before your procedure. You can drink water up to two hours prior to your appointment time, unless otherwise advised.
Can I take my prescribed medicines as usual?

If you are on blood thinning tablets such as Warfarin and have not already been asked to stop taking this medication prior to your appointment, then please call the Radiology Department for advice.

If you take any other medication, continue to take as usual unless you have been specifically told otherwise by the CT Appointments Team or Radiology Nurses.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but for safety reasons they will not be able to accompany you into the CT scan room except in very special circumstances.

What happens at the hospital before the drainage?

Most drainage procedures are performed as a day case so you will be admitted to a ward in the hospital. You will be told exactly where to go and at what time in your appointment letter.

You will have some assessments carried out by nurses on the ward, such as pulse and blood pressure checks. They may also insert a small cannula (needle) into a vein in your arm or back of your hand and take blood samples if this is necessary. (Sometimes your GP will have taken blood samples before you come into hospital, if they are required). You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. It is advisable to leave any valuables at home.

At your CT drainage appointment time, a porter will take you to the Radiology Department where you will be greeted by the Reception Team, Radiology Assistants and Radiology Nurses.

A Radiologist (a doctor who specialises in reading x-ray images) will then explain the drainage procedure in detail. They will also discuss any relevant risks and will ask you to sign a written consent form for the examination to go ahead. If you have any concerns or questions about the procedure please ask the radiologist at this time.

What happens during a CT Guided Drainage?

Once in the scan room the radiographer (member of the Radiology Team trained to carry out scans) will ask you to either lie on your back or your front depending on where the radiologist is going to drain the fluid from. You will need to lie very still in this position for up to one hour so it is important that you are comfortable.

The radiologist will use the CT scanner to decide on a suitable point to drain the fluid from and the radiographer will mark this point on your skin with a pen. To keep everything clean the radiologist will be wearing sterile gloves and a gown. The chosen area on your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic and the area will be covered with a sterile towel. Next the radiologist will anaesthetise the area with local anaesthetic. This may sting a little to start with but then the area should become numb.

The drainage needle will then be inserted into your skin and you may feel pressure but you should not feel pain.
To ensure the needle is in the right place, the scanning table will move your body through the ‘doughnut’ shaped hole (gantry) of the CT scanner so that the relevant area of your body can be scanned. You may be asked to hold your breath for a moment. We understand that some people have difficulty holding their breath - please tell us at the time if this is a problem for you.

What happens next will vary in different situations. Small collections of fluid may simply be drained through the needle (aspirated), or through a slightly larger needle or plastic tube, which is then removed altogether. Alternatively for large collections of fluid, it may be necessary to place a larger drainage tube (catheter) into the collection and attach it to the skin with a special dressing. This is so that the abnormal fluid can continue to drain for several days. There will be staff with you at all times to reassure you.

**How long will the drainage take?**

The whole procedure will take between 30 to 60 minutes.

We will try to keep to your appointment time but occasionally we have to scan patients urgently at short notice. This means your appointment could be delayed. We will let you know if this is the case.

**Are there any risks?**

As with x-rays, CT scans use radiation. The level of radiation used is small and the benefits of the scan are thought to outweigh any risks.

A CT guided drainage is considered a safe procedure but there are a few risks and complications that can arise as with any medical procedure. Small risks vary depending on where the fluid is drained from.

The main complications are bleeding or infection. These complications occur rarely. The radiologist will explain the risks to you before the procedure.

The biggest risk is being unable to place the drainage tube satisfactorily into the abnormal fluid. If this happens, your consultant may have to arrange another method of draining the collection, which may involve an operation.

Occasionally, the drain may fall out or the fluid may collect again after it has been drained. In these circumstances the procedure may have to be repeated.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this procedure. Do bear in mind that there may be greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this procedure.

**What happens after the procedure?**

After the procedure you will go back to the ward and the nurses will perform routine checks on your pulse and blood pressure to make sure that there are no problems. Usually you will need to stay on the ward for about five to six hours after the drainage before you can go home.
You must not drive yourself home on the day of the procedure. A relative or friend should accompany you home and stay with you until the next day. You can eat and drink as normal.

If the drainage catheter has been left in your body for the time being, then it will be attached to a collection bag. You should be able to continue daily activities as usual with the catheter in place. How long the drainage catheter will stay in can only be answered by the doctors looking after you. It may only need to stay in a short time. It is also possible that you will need further scans to check that the collection has been drained satisfactorily. When the catheter is removed, generally there is only slight discomfort.

**How do I find out the results of my drainage?**

A sample of the fluid drained will be sent to the laboratories for testing. This can take up to one week. The doctor who asked us to perform your test will then arrange an appointment for you to discuss the results of the drainage. If after three weeks they have not contacted you, please contact the hospital switchboard on (0191) 482 0000 and ask to speak to your consultant’s secretary.

**Who do I contact if I have concerns?**

Should you require further advice on the issues contained in this leaflet, please do not hesitate to contact the Radiology/CT Department on (0191) 445 2094.

**Data Protection**

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.