

University Dental Hospital of Manchester
Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

Cone Beam Computed Tomography Scans

You have been referred for a Cone Beam Computed Tomography (CBCT) scan. This document may help to answer any questions that you have about the examination. You are very welcome to ask anything when you come for your appointment, or by telephone to the X-ray Department at the Dental Hospital.

What is a CBCT scan?

It is a type of X-ray examination for dentists, which allows us to produce 3-dimensional images of your teeth and jaws. These are useful in many different types of dentistry, especially for dental implant planning, managing impacted teeth and root canal treatments.

Where do I go for the scan?

The CBCT is carried out in the Dental Hospital X-ray Department on a state of the art scanner.

Who will carry out the scanning?

Scanning is carried out by trained radiographers. A dental radiologist (trained in interpreting the scans) will also be involved.

How is the scan carried out?

You will be sitting in a comfortable chair. The scan needs to be done while you are absolutely still, so we use a headband and chin rest to help you. Please be advised that the CBCT scanner cannot operate accurately if the weight in the chair exceeds 20st or 130kg.

To get into the scanner you must be able to climb up one step.



How long does the scan take?

For most patients the scan will take about 20 minutes.

What does the scan itself involve?

After you are positioned properly in the chair, we will adjust the chair position. We take two images at the start so that we can accurately choose where to carry out the scan itself. During the scan the machine moves around your head, but doesn't touch you. Once the scan is finished, you will be asked to stay in the chair until the images are checked.

Is there anything I need to do before I come for my appointment?

If you have earrings or other facial jewellery/piercings, these may need to be removed before the scan, so doing this in advance of your visit will save time. Please bring your denture/stent, if one has been provided by your dentist, for the scan.

Should the amount of X-rays I will receive worry me?

No. All CBCT referrals are justified by a consultant dental radiologist and only approved when it is judged that the scan is appropriate. Although the X-ray exposure with this CBCT machine is greater than with a traditional dental X-ray examination, it is far less than you would get with a 'medical' CT scan that would be the only alternative. The radiography staff will always make the scan area as small as possible to keep exposures as low as achievable.

Who interprets the scans?

All CBCT examinations are checked and reported by a consultant dental radiologist before being sent to the hospital dental team that referred you.

How can I get further information?

In the first instance, phone the X-ray department on:
0161 529 6356. Opening times 8:45 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday.