



X-rays and CT scans in pregnancy

You are pregnant, or may be pregnant, and you had an X-ray or CT scan in the emergency department. The doctor decided the scan was needed to check your health. This sheet explains what this means for you and your baby.

What is it?

X-rays and CT scans use a small amount of radiation. The dose from most scans is far below the level known to harm an unborn baby. Scans of the arms, legs, head or chest send very little radiation to the womb. Your safety matters to your baby too, and missing a serious illness is usually a much bigger risk than the scan.

Looking after yourself at home

- You do not need to do anything special after the scan.
- The radiation does not stay in your body, and you are not a risk to others.
- If you were given dye (contrast), drink plenty of fluids today.
- Breastfeeding can continue as normal after a scan, including with contrast.
- Write down which scan you had and the date, to share with your pregnancy doctor.

Follow-up

- Tell your pregnancy doctor or midwife about the scan at your next visit.
- Keep all your usual pregnancy check-ups.
- Ask your doctor if you have any worries; they can explain the dose from your scan.

Come back to the emergency department or call an ambulance straight away if:

- Bleeding from the vagina
- Severe or constant pain in your tummy
- Fluid leaking from the vagina
- Your baby is moving less than usual, or has stopped moving
- A severe headache, blurred vision, or sudden swelling of your face or hands
- Fainting, or feeling very dizzy or short of breath



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This leaflet is general information to support the advice your doctor or nurse gave you today. It does not replace their advice. If you are worried, seek medical help.

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