

What is a CT Cholangiogram?

Your doctor or surgeon has referred you for a CT Cholangiogram and has asked our specialist doctor, a radiologist, to look in more detail at your gallbladder and/or the bile ducts in your liver. A CT scan is used to examine the gall bladder and bile ducts. Biliscopin, a special contrast medium (sometimes called “x-ray dye”), is a colourless liquid which drains into your bile through your liver. This allows our radiologist to see your gallbladder and bile ducts more clearly on the CT scan. Biliscopin does not “stain” your body and will be passed out in the urine and bile over a few hours.



How long will the procedure take?



The procedure itself takes approximately 1½ hours.

Please allow time to register at reception and up to 1 hour for the procedure. Some patients may be requested to also wait up to 30 minutes after the procedure so our staff can observe you to be sure that you are ready to be discharged home. Therefore you may be on site for up to 2 hours in total.

Is there any special preparation required?

Special preparation is required. At the time of booking, our staff will provide you with preparation instructions such as limiting your food intake prior to the procedure.

When booking your appointment, it is essential that you inform our staff if you have any allergies, any problems with your thyroid, take diabetes medication containing Metformin, or are pregnant or breastfeeding. If you are being treated for thyrotoxicosis or take Neo-Mercazole (carmibazole), it is very important that you tell our staff as another type of scan may be more suitable for you.

Please list or bring all of your prescribed medications and those medications that you buy over the counter, including herbal remedies and supplements.

If you take diabetes medication that contains *Metformin*, you may need to stop taking it for a few days before this CT scan, but only if it is known that your kidney function is poor. **It is very important that you do not stop any medications without consulting with our radiology clinical staff and your own doctor.** They will give you specific instructions about when to stop and restart the medication. A simple blood test to measure your kidney function may be required before and after the CT scan. You should continue with all other medications as usual. Another simple blood test may be required to check your liver function on the day before the procedure.

What do I need to do on the day of the procedure?

You will be asked not to eat or drink anything for 8 hours before your CT scan. You may drink water or weak tea if you are thirsty. You should not smoke. If you have diabetes and require insulin, you will need to adjust your insulin dose accordingly. You will need to discuss this with your referring doctor.

On the day of your appointment, please ensure you bring:

- Your referral form (if you have it)
- All previous relevant scans or x-rays
- Medicare and healthcare cards (e.g. DVA card or concession card)
- List of all medications

What happens during the procedure?

Prior to the CT scan, our clinical staff (radiologist, radiographer or nurse) will discuss the examination with you, including the need for the injection of Biliscopin and any risks specific to you. You will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

You will need to have a cannula (“drip”) put into a vein in your arm so that you can have the injection of Biliscopin before the CT scan. This will be done by one of our clinical staff -a radiologist, radiographer or nurse.

Biliscopin is given slowly through the cannula over 45-60 minutes. During this time, our clinical staff will monitor your blood pressure and pulse regularly and you must remain lying flat. When having an injection of iodinated contrast (Biliscopin) in the vein, most patients will not notice any sensations, but some patients notice a very warm feeling that spreads throughout their body during and after the injection. Occasionally, patients get a ‘metallic’ taste at the back of their mouth or may feel nauseous (like vomiting) for a short time during and after the injection.

One hour after the injection of Biliscopin was started, you will be brought to the CT room on a trolley and moved across onto the CT table whilst lying flat. When the CT scan is finished, the cannula will be removed.

Are there any after effects from the treatment?

Most people feel fine after an injection of iodinated contrast. Serious reactions to contrast very rarely occur more than 1 hour after the contrast is given. However, if you become or feel unwell or notice anything wrong after you have gone home go to your nearest emergency department or GP.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be able to eat and drink as normal following the CT scan. Biliscopin does not affect your ability to carry out normal daily activities.

If you are diabetic or have kidney problems, our staff will provide you with clear written instructions on ways to look after yourself following the injection of iodinated contrast.

What are the benefits?

The injection of Biliscopin will provide additional information to the radiologist (specialist doctor) who is going to interpret your imaging (the pictures taken when you have your scan). This additional information will often lead to a more accurate diagnosis. This type of CT scan cannot be performed without injecting Biliscopin.

Are there any risks?

In referring you for this CT scan, your doctor believes that the benefits for you are greater than the risks. There are some risks and complications associated with CT Cholangiogram.

CT uses ionising radiation to produce the images. The radiation doses associated with performing a CT scan of your liver, a CT Cholangiogram, are kept as low as possible by the CT radiographer and the associated risks are low.

Please inform the staff before the procedure if you:

- have any allergies;
- have any thyroid problems;
- are or suspect that you may be pregnant;

- are asthmatic;
- are diabetic;
- have any kidney problems; or
- take diabetic medication that contains *Metformin*.

The risks and complications associated with iodinated contrast media, including Biliscopin, can include but are not limited to the following:

- Leakage of contrast media outside the blood vessel
- Allergic reactions

In the event that you experience one of these side effects, the imaging practice has staff who are suitably trained to give appropriate medication and use the equipment needed to treat a contrast reaction.

Before the injection the radiologist or clinical staff will discuss the procedure with you in detail, including any risks specific to you. You will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

When do I get the results?

The radiologist will send a report outlining the results of the CT scan to your referring doctor/surgeon and your regular GP. It is important that you make a follow-up appointment with your referring doctor/surgeon about one or two weeks after the CT scan so that they can review your results with you.

I still have questions; who can I ask?

Medical information can be complex, and you may receive information that you do not fully understand. It is important for you to consider the risks and outcomes of the procedure as well as your personal needs before making a decision to undergo the procedure.

If you have read this online information and are still unsure if this is the correct scan for you; before making a booking, you should discuss your questions or concerns with your referring doctor in the first instance. Your regular GP and/ or your family may also be a useful resource. Your referring doctor can answer questions about the risks and benefits of not having the procedure and other options for treatment.

If you have questions before your appointment about what is involved on the day, our staff would be happy to assist. Please contact the imaging centre where you have made your appointment.