



Forget the car... give your body an MOT!

Innovative scanning procedures
available in the UK

When you consider how much money the average motorist spends putting a car through an MOT, surely you'd want to do the same for your body? Even if you aren't one of the many people in the UK who have a family history of disease, it makes sense to take a more pro-active approach to your long-term health. Fortunately, there are procedures available that can help spot the early signs of illness. One of these is CT scanning.

Private CT screening has been popular in the US for quite a while, but only reached these shores relatively recently. Traditionally, scanners were used when patients had symptoms that GPs felt needed further investigation - the scanner enables the radiologist to 'look inside' the human body and find out what is going on. However, with the latest machines there is no need to wait for symptoms to appear. They can act as an early warning system for signs of heart disease, colon cancer, lung cancer, aneurysms, osteoporosis and other illnesses.

How can it help?

Heart disease is still the single biggest cause of death in the UK, but early detection through CT scanning can greatly improve the chances of survival. With advances in heart surgery, early intervention can now offer a new lease of life to someone suffering with coronary heart disease.

Whilst the risk of developing cancer in the UK is an alarming 1 in 3, the good news is that 75% of those who develop it go on to beat it, making early diagnosis even more valuable. Of those, 78% will survive

lung cancer, 89% colon cancer, 92% breast cancer and 94% prostate cancer. By offering private CT scans to the general population, more unnecessary deaths can be avoided by early detection and treatment.

Following a scan, the images are analysed by a Consultant Radiologist so that any appropriate action can be taken. Mostly, patients are either given the all-clear or are advised to make changes in their lifestyle, such as exercising more often or taking appropriate medication. In rare



cases, patients are recommended for possible surgery. Of course, a scan indicating an all-clear is not an absolute guarantee that you won't become ill. For example, small cancers invisible to the naked eye cannot be detected.

Is it scary?

With most modern CT scanning, the experience of being closed inside a tunnel is gone; you simply lie down while an opening passes over you. It is a painless process and the entire appointment takes from around 20 minutes for a simple lung scan to about an hour for a body scan.

Exposure to radiation should not be an issue either, as a modern heart scan emits less than the equivalent of six months of average UK background radiation, while a Virtual Colonoscopy is about the same as a year's natural exposure. In addition, people with a clean bill of health only need a scan once every five years.

Looking for a scan?

Saga has recently launched a health screening service in association with the UK's leading CT scanning provider, Lifescan. Since its foundation in 2002, Lifescan has brought peace of mind to around 14,000 people (including 300 GPs!). The partnership allows Saga customers access to the most up-to-date medical scanning technology at significantly reduced prices. The 'open' scans take place at modern, comfortable centres located around the country, with prices ranging from £100 for a bone density scan to £750 for a body scan and virtual colonoscopy. For a value-for-money package, Saga MultiScan offers a unique combination of CT scans and blood tests for just £530. These would normally cost well over £1,000 if taken separately.

Following the scan, a Consultant Radiologist reviews the results in depth. A detailed written report, together with a CD Rom of your images, will usually be sent to you within 3-4 working days (and to your GP as well if you like). So now could be a good time to give your body that MOT!

For more information about Saga Health Screening call 0800 056 6057, stating reference S6723, or visit www.saga.co.uk/healthscreening.