

Melanoma: follow-up with regular CT scans - yes or no?

Use this decision aid if you have malignant melanoma stage IIC and have not had a sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB), or if you have malignant melanoma stage III, to help you and your healthcare professional talk about whether or not to have regular follow-up CT scans once your treatment is finished.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Follow-up with regular CT scans	Follow-up without regular CT scans
What does it involve?	Having regular body CT scans to check if the melanoma has come back or spread to other places. You will also have regular follow-up checks.	Instead of body CT scans, you will have regular examinations. If the melanoma does come back or spread, it will normally be found during these examinations or when symptoms develop. A body scan may be done at that time if needed.
Will it change my chance of being cured?	It is possible that you are cured already. There is no evidence that using body CT scans to find recurrence or spread of your melanoma early changes the chance of cure.	It is possible that you are cured already. There is no evidence that using body CT scans to find recurrence or spread of your melanoma early changes the chance of cure.
What are the advantages?	It can be reassuring to be told that the body scan shows no sign of melanoma. Finding out as soon as possible that the melanoma has come back or spread means that treatments can start when you are still well enough to cope with the side effects.	Some people prefer not to have the stress of regular body CT scans and the worry about possible results.
What are the disadvantages?	Around 50 of every 100 patients (50%) will not develop a recurrence and so the body CT scans would be unnecessary. Having regular body CT scans can make some people anxious. The CT scans may also show things that don't look normal but are not caused by melanoma. This may result in more tests and more anxiety.	If the melanoma comes back, it may not be found as soon as it might have been if you had regular body CT scans. This delay may mean not being able to start some treatments while you are still well enough to cope with the side effects.
What are the risks of regular scanning?	Regular body CT scans can put you at risk of other problems, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They expose the body to radiation, which can increase the risk of cancer in the future. • CT scans of the brain and neck increase the risk of developing cataracts. • CT scans of the chest cause a very small increase in the risk of thyroid cancer 	Does not apply