

Procedure Information: Computed Tomography (CT)

What is a Computed Tomography (CT) ?

A CT or CAT scan is a non-invasive medical exam that helps physicians diagnose and treat medical conditions. CT scanning combines special X-ray equipment with computers to produce multiple images or pictures of the inside of the body. CT scans reveal more details than regular X-ray exams by providing greater clarity of internal organs, soft tissue and blood vessels.

When is a Computed Tomography (CT) ordered?

CT imaging is:

- Used to examine patients with injuries from trauma such as a motor vehicle accident
- Performed on patients with symptoms such as chest or abdominal pain or difficulty breathing
- Often the best method for detecting many different cancers since the image allows a physician to confirm location, measure a tumor's size and note the extent of the tumor's involvement with other nearby tissues
- A significant role in detection, diagnosis and treatment of vascular diseases that can lead to stroke, kidney failure or even death
- Used to view small bones and surrounding tissue such as muscle and blood vessels in diagnosing and treating spinal problems and injuries to the hands, feet and other skeletal structures

Patient preparation

Females: If there is any chance you are pregnant please contact your ordering physician.

You should have only liquids for the meal before the scan is scheduled. You may take your prescription medicine. If you are diabetic, follow your doctor's instructions about eating before the scan.

Patient preparation...Continued

Some abdominal CT scans require you to drink a contrast material (flavored liquid) before your exam. The liquid outlines the stomach and intestines assuring positive identification of these organs. Please arrange to pick up this liquid before your appointment. Follow the instructions given to you by the radiographer.

During a CT scan, it may be necessary to inject intravenous contrast material. If your exam requires IV contrast and any of the following apply to you, blood work (BUN and Creatinine) must be completed within 30 days of scheduled exam.

(Please check with your ordering physician)

- Age 60 or above
- Asthma
- Heart disease
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Kidney disease
- Multiple myeloma
- Diabetes *
- Dehydration
- Recent contrast injection of radiopaque contrast (X-ray dye within 72 hours)

What happens during a Computed Tomography (CT) ?

You will be taken to a private changing room to change for the procedure if needed. A radiographer will take you to the exam room, verify your identity and obtain medical history for the radiologist. You will be positioned as comfortable as possible onto the CT table. You are secured to the table, instructed not to move during the procedure and moved into the scanner. Your radiographer will be in an adjacent room where you can be seen and heard while they control the procedure.

For chest and abdomen CT scans, you may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds. During the exam you may be injected with a contrast material or “dye” before the next scan to increase the amount of information available from the scans.

Length of Procedure

A CT exam usually takes 10-30 minutes.

What will I experience during and after a Computed Tomography (CT) procedure?

You may feel a minor sting as the X-ray dye is injected into your arm through a small needle. Some patients experience a warm feeling in their face and neck, may even go to your bladder where you feel like you wet your pants. This is only a sensation that last about 1-2 minutes. You may return to your normal diet following the scan unless your doctor has told you otherwise. If you were injected with dye for the scan, drink plenty of fluids afterwards.

*******IMPORTANT*******

IV contrast injection

****** If you are diabetic and take any oral metformin/glucofage medication, you may take your medication the day of exam. After exam do not take your metformin/glucofage medication until your doctor approves your lab results (48 hour BUN and Creatinine) showing proper renal function and consults you to resume diabetic medications.