

Computed Tomography (CT Scan)

What is a CT scan?

CT scanning, sometimes called CAT scan, is a non-invasive procedure. It uses radiation to produce multiple images. These multiple images are joined together by a computer to create a cross-sectional picture of the internal organs, bone, soft tissue and blood vessels.



When is it used?

When your healthcare provider needs more detailed information a CT scan is often the preferred method of imaging. It can identify normal and abnormal tissue. CT scan is an invaluable tool used in the diagnosis of cancers, cardiovascular disease, infectious disease, trauma and musculoskeletal disorders.

How do I prepare for a CT scan?

You should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing (sweat suit) for the exam. Metal objects such as zippers and jewelry should be removed prior to your scan. If an intravenous contrast (an IV solution) is needed for your exam you will be required to fast 4 hours prior. If oral contrast material (barium) is necessary for the test it will be administered 60-90 minutes prior to your examination.

What happens during the procedure?

The technologist will position you on the scan table. If IV contrast is necessary, a needle will be placed into your vein. The table will slowly move through the scanner as the actual scan is performed. The machine can be programmed to image the body at different angles. Inside the scanner, multiple X-ray beams pass through your body. The images are then displayed onto a computer monitor and prepared for your healthcare provider to review.

You can expect to be on the scan table between 10-15 minutes. At all times the technologist is able to observe and communicate with you. The contrast injection may cause a warm feeling, flushed face, headache, and salty or metallic taste in the mouth.

What happens after the procedure?

If you were given a contrast agent for the scan, drinking extra fluids after the procedure is recommended.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

CT Scanning is painless and a fast imaging technique. It provides detailed images to assist your healthcare provider with diagnosis and treatment.

What are the risks associated with this procedure?

In this procedure your body is exposed to radiation. Exposure of radiation can be dangerous if you are exposed to it often or in large amounts. If you are pregnant, you should not have a CT scan without first discussing the possible risks with your healthcare provider.

Rarely some people have an allergic reaction to the contrast agents. Most reactions happen right away, but you could have a delayed reaction. These signs include itching, rash, or sweating. If you start having these symptoms, call your healthcare provider right away.

If you are allergic to iodine or have diabetes you need to inform your healthcare provider **PRIOR** to the examination.