

WHAT TO EXPECT FOR MY CT EXAM

A computed tomography (CT) scan combines a series of X-ray images taken from different angles and uses computer software to construct cross-sectional images, or slices, of the anatomy within your body.

A CT scan has a variety of uses, but is particularly well-suited to quickly examine patients who may have internal injuries or other physiological conditions. A CT scan can be used to visualize nearly all parts of the body.

During your CT exam, you are briefly exposed to low doses of ionizing radiation. This amount is greater than what you would receive during a regular X-ray because the CT exam gathers a large amount of detailed information.

Your doctor may recommend you receive an iodine based contrast material through a vein in your arm before or during your exam. During the injection you may experience a warm sensation or a metallic taste in your mouth. The contrast material is needed for some CT scans to help highlight certain areas within your body. It is important to tell your doctor and the technologist if you've ever had a reaction to contrast material in iodine. In addition, you may also need to drink a contrast solution for certain scans of your abdomen.

Depending on which part of your body is being scanned, you may be asked to do the following:

- Take off some or all of your clothing and wear a hospital gown for the duration of your exam
- Remove metal objects, such as a belt, jewelry, dentures, eyeglasses and hearing aids, which might interfere with CT images
- You may be asked to have certain blood work done prior to your exam.
- Refrain from eating or drinking for a few hours before your CT scan
- Refrain from taking certain medications before and after your CT scan
(*Restrictions regarding eating, drinking or medications will be provided when you call to schedule your exam)

CT scans are very sensitive to motion and it is important to lay as still as possible and to follow certain breathing instructions during your scan in order to obtain the clearest image quality and accurate results. The CT technologist will provide you with your exam specific instructions prior to and throughout your study. CT scans are painless and take only a few minutes.

CT scanners are shaped like a large doughnut. During your exam you will lie on a narrow, motorized table which will move through the opening while the technologist is obtaining your images. The Technologist is in a separate control room but can see, hear and communicate with you.

After your exam you can return to your normal routine. If contrast material was used during your exam you may receive special instructions after your procedure, such as drinking lots of fluids.

A radiologist will provide an interpretation and a report will be generated and sent to your ordering provider.

For additional information feel free to visit RadiologyInfo.org.

