



Radiology Services

CT Scan

Understanding Your CT scan

Your doctor has requested that you have a CT scan. CT scans often can replace certain diagnostic techniques (such as exploratory surgery and other procedures). This scan can save you discomfort and inconvenience. We hope this sheet will answer common questions you may have about CT scans.

What is a CT scan?

A CT scan is a painless test that takes pictures of the inside of the body. CT scans are especially good for showing bone, soft tissue and blood vessels. Each picture shows only a few layers of the tissue or organ at a time. This test usually takes about five to 10 minutes.

How can a CT scan help me?

CT scans can detect some conditions that regular X-rays cannot. Head CT scans may detect or rule out tumors, blood clots, enlarged vessels and other disorders. Body CT scans may detect or rule out enlarged lymph nodes, pancreatic disease, back problems, lung cancer and other conditions.

How should I prepare for the exam?

- If you have diabetes, tell us before we perform your test.
- **DO NOT** eat or drink anything four to six hours before a CT scan if your doctor has ordered the test with contrast or sedation; however, you may take medication with a small amount of water if necessary.
- Follow any other special instructions from your doctor or caregiver.

What happens just before the exam?

Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled time to register. Orders for your exam are necessary to perform the procedure—**we cannot proceed without the orders**. Please bring a copy of your insurance card. After you are registered in the business office, you will be directed to the Radiology Department.

Please tell us if you are ...

- Pregnant
- Allergic to any foods or medicines
- Diabetic
- Taking medicines (e.g., Glucophage, Glucovance, Avandomet)

You may need an IV or oral contrast before the exam. An X-ray dye or contrast liquid may help your body parts show up better in the pictures. You may be asked to drink a liquid an hour before your scan. This fluid coats your stomach and intestines. Or you may be given an IV so we can put the dye into your vein.

What happens during the exam?

You may be asked to put on a hospital gown and remove your jewelry. The CT staff will help you lie down on the CT table. You must lie very still during this test. The CT pictures may not be clear if you move.

The CT technologist will help position you on the examination table. A strap will secure you. You will be moved into the scanner. The technologist will leave the room to control the procedure where he or she has a clear view of you and the computer. You will be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds.

How long does the exam take?

On average, a CT scan takes five to 10 minutes.

Is it painful?

No, but if given dye through an IV, you may feel a warm sensation throughout your body.

How do I get the results?

The radiologist will study the results of your exam and give a report to your personal physician. (By law, technologists cannot discuss findings on your CT before it has been read by a radiologist.) Your doctor then will share these results with you. Sometimes, additional tests or treatment may be needed.

We hope you are pleased with the care you receive in the Radiology Department. Our goal is to give you the very best care and attention.

For more information, please call Patient Scheduling at (864) 455-7774 or visit ghs.org/radiology.