

PREPARING FOR YOUR CT SCAN

A CT scan (computed tomography scan) is a diagnostic test where a series of X-rays are taken and combined to create a picture of a cross-section or slice of the body. With a CT scan, doctors can see bones and soft tissue. The images can be taken of almost any part of the body and used to diagnose a variety of medical conditions including cancer, bone fractures, blood clots, and more.

There is radiation exposure during a CT scan, so if you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant, please speak with your doctor before undergoing this exam.

What to Know Before Your Exam

- Typically a CT scan appointment will last approximately 15 minutes. For a CT scan with oral contrast, it could take up to 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- If you are receiving CT scan IV contrast, do not eat or drink 4 hours prior your exam. You may continue to drink water if you prefer.
- Continue to take all of your prescribed medications.
- Please do not bring children under age 12 to your appointment.

Preparing for Your Exam

- For four hours prior to your exam, please do not eat solid foods. You may drink fluids such as water, juice, or black decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- Some CT scan exams, particularly abdominal CT scans, may require that you drink water or an oral contrast so we may better visualize structures within the abdominal area.
- Please continue to take all of your prescribed medications. Bring a list of your medications to your appointment that includes the name of the medication, the dose, and the dose frequency.
- If you are an insulin-dependent diabetic, please continue to take your insulin as prescribed and drink extra fruit juice to make up for the fasting of solid foods for the 4-hour period that your stomach is empty. If you are taking any type of diabetic medications, please continue to take the prescribed dose.
- Please be sure to let our staff know if you have any allergies, serious health problems, or have had any recent surgeries. Please disclose if you have metal implants, medical/electronic devices in your body, or there is a possibility that you are pregnant.

Bring to Your Exam

- Photo ID
- Insurance card(s)
- Form of payment
- List of your current medications and dosages, including over-the-counter medicines
- X-rays or copies of other previously completed imaging

Your Arrival Time

- If you are having a CT scan of your abdomen or pelvis, you may be required to drink an oral contrast solution or water before your exam. This may affect your arrival time, and you will receive a pre-appointment phone call to clarify your arrival time and location of your CT scan.
- If you are having a CT scan of a different body part that does not include the abdomen or pelvis, please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your appointment time. Arriving early will allow time for our registration process and the completion of a brief questionnaire regarding your allergies, surgical history, and other pertinent medical information.

During Your Exam

- You may be asked to change into a gown.
- During a CT scan, you will lie down on a table for the duration of the test. The table will move through the center of the CT scan machine which is shaped like a large ring.
- Many patients receive a contrast agent intravenously (IV) during their CT scan. If your doctor or the radiologist has determined that this procedure will enhance your CT scan results, the technologist will place an IV in your arm or hand once you are brought into the CT scan procedure room.
- You can expect your CT scan appointment to last approximately 15 minutes start to finish. If you are having a CT scan with oral contrast, it could take as long as an hour and 15 minutes.

After Your Exam

- Once the CT scan is complete, a radiologist will study the images and share the results with your doctor. Your doctor will then discuss the findings with you at your next appointment. Please note that you will not receive results at the time of the CT scan.

Remove All Metal Objects

Anything with metal should be removed or brought to the attention of a technologist before entering the CT scan room.

- Jewelry
- Watches
- Glasses
- Hairpins
- Hearing aids
- Bras with underwire
- Dentures
- Medication patches (e.g., nicotine or pain patch)
- Clothing labeled as antimicrobial, antibacterial, or having "silver technology"