COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT) SCAN

CT Patient Information

What Is This Test?

Computerized Tomography (CT) combines X-ray equipment with computer technology to allow your doctor to see your organs and tissues. It is different from regular X-rays because it creates images of thin cross sections or planes of your body, and it is able to detect some conditions that regular X-rays cannot.

What Should I Expect?

A typical CT exam usually lasts 30 minutes to an hour. The length of your exam will depend on the type of exam your doctor has ordered. During the test you will lie on an exam table that is attached to the CT scanner, which is a large doughnut-shaped machine. During the exam, the circular tube will rotate around you, passing a narrow beam of X-ray from many different angles through the body part being examined. Each rotation takes less than a second and provides a picture of a thin slice of the organ or area. A computer will analyze and create images that are then saved.

It's important that you remain as still as possible throughout the exam because movement can blur the images being obtained. The CT scan is painless, but you will hear the sound of the scanner working. The technologist performing the exam is available to you throughout the exam for questions or concerns.

Will I Need An Injection?

An iodine dye (contrast material) is often used to make structures and organs easier to see on the CT pictures. The dye may be used to check blood flow, find tumors, and look for other problems. The dye can be used in different ways. It may be injected into a vein (IV) in your arm, or you may drink the dye for some tests. If you have a history of allergies, especially to iodine, please mention it to your doctor or the technologist when you arrive. It is common for the iodine contrast to cause a temporary flush, wave of nausea, or a metallic taste in the mouth. Please report these or any other symptoms to the technologist.

How Do I Get The Results?

After your CT scan, the images will be looked at by a radiologist (a doctor who is specially trained in reading and interpreting X-ray images). This physician will prepare a report that is shared with your doctor (the doctor who ordered your CT exam). Your doctor will discuss the results with you and explain what they mean. He or she can answer any questions you may have about your results at that time.