

# CT Exam

## CT Exam

A CT (computed tomography) exam uses X-ray and a computer to get an in-depth look at your internal organs, tissues, blood vessels and bones.

The result is an image that provides a clear and detailed picture of your body.

## What To Tell Your Health Care Provider and Technologist

Tell your health care provider and technologist if you:

- have had a contrast reaction
  - To try to reduce the risk of a contrast reaction, you will be given a medicine to take the day before your exam.
  - There is still a chance you may have a reaction. If you have questions or concerns, talk with your health care provider.
- have any allergies to latex or medicine
- are breastfeeding, pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- have kidney disease
- **have diabetes** (Ask for an early morning appointment and talk with your health care provider about your medicine needs.)

## Your Appointment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m.

- have an insulin pump, glucose monitor or both
  - If you wear a continuous glucose monitor, it needs to be removed for the CT exam. The machine could damage the monitor, causing your glucose readings to be wrong. Consider scheduling your test on a day that you are to remove and replace the monitor.
- take any medicines. Check with your health care provider to see if you have special medicine instructions.

## Contrast

You may need to have an intravenous (IV) contrast injection. The contrast will help certain areas in your body be seen better on the image.

If your CT exam uses contrast:

- Do not eat or drink anything for 2 to 3 hours before your exam.
- You may need a blood test to check your creatinine level (kidney function) before you have the injection.

**(over)**

- There is a small chance you could develop a contrast reaction. **Reactions normally occur right after the injection.** They are usually mild.
- Your health care team will watch you carefully during the injection and exam.
- If you have any symptoms of a contrast reaction, you will stay at the hospital or clinic until you feel better. Team members are prepared to quickly treat any symptoms during your exam.

**Note:** If you have a contrast reaction and are given Benadryl® (diphenhydramine), your technologist will recommend that you **do not** drive for 6 hours. Benadryl can make you drowsy.

## Before the Exam

- Follow any instructions you received from your health care provider.
- Take any medicines you need with a small sip of water, or as directed by your health care provider.
- Bring a list of your current medicines with you to the exam. Include all prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, herbal or natural products.
- The radiology staff will answer your questions.

## During the Exam

- You will be helped on the scan table. It will move in and out of a doughnut-shaped piece of equipment.
- You will need to lie still on your back for 10 to 15 minutes during the exam.

- You may be asked to hold your breath.
- If you need a contrast injection:
  - An IV will be placed in your arm before the exam starts.
  - When the contrast is injected, you may feel a warmth or flushing or notice a metallic taste. This is normal.

## After the Exam

- Return to your normal activities, diet and medicines. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- If you received a contrast injection:
  - The IV catheter will be removed.
  - If your health care provider says you are able, drink up to four 8-ounce glasses of water for the next 8 hours to clear the contrast out of your system.

## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have discomfort, redness or warmth at the IV site
- develop signs of a possible contrast reaction:
  - hives
  - itching
  - swelling.

## Results

- A radiologist or cardiologist will look at and interpret your scan.
- Your health care provider will receive the exam results and either talk with or mail you the results.