

Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan with Anesthesia: A Parent's Guide

What is a CT scan?

A CT is a test that takes many detailed pictures of the inside of the body.

Preparing for the test:

- A nurse will call you to give you directions about when your child can eat and drink before the test.
- Visiting children must stay in the waiting room and may not be left alone. If you plan to go into the test room with your child, please bring another adult with you to watch your children.

What will happen during the test?

- You and your child will be called back to the holding room where a nurse practitioner will ask you questions about your family's medical history as well as your child's.
- Your child will be weighed and have temperature, blood pressure and oxygen level checked.
- If your child needs to drink contrast for the test, staff will mix the contrast with juice or powerade and have your child start drinking it slowly.
- Your child will also need to change clothes into a hospital gown.
- Next you and your child will go to the nursing area where you will be asked additional questions and your child will have an intravenous line (IV) placed for anesthesia and contrast if needed.
- To place the IV, first the nurse will look for a good vein (usually on the hands or arms), then clean the area, spray a special cold spray on the area to help your child not feel it as much and then use a needle to place a small tube into your child's vein. Once the IV is in place, the needle will be taken out leaving only a small, soft tube in your child. The nurses will put special water in IV to make sure it's in the right place and then place tape on it to help it stay in place and keep your child from moving the area where the IV is.
- A staff member will bring your child into the CT room where one adult family member will be able to stay with your child until he/she is given the anesthesia and falls asleep.



- Staff will help your child onto procedure bed and place monitors and blood pressure cuff on his/her body.
- Then the anesthesiologist will connect a tube to your child's IV to give your child medicine which makes your child sleep during the test to be sure he/she is very still to get clear pictures. The medicine may make your child feel uncomfortable as it is going in through the IV. Your child will fall asleep very fast once the medicine has been given. Once your child is asleep, you will be given a pager and need to wait in the waiting room.
- When the test is done your child will be moved to the recovery area where all children wake up after having anesthesia. You will then be paged to come be with your child as he/she wakes up.
- Once your child is awake the nurse will remove the IV and give instructions for you to take your child home.

How can I help my child?

- Explain to your child what will be happening during the test.
- Be honest with your child about the test.
- Bring comforting things that your child enjoys from home such as a favorite toy, blanket, book, etc.
- Give praise and support to your child (say "good job holding still", acknowledge his/her feelings).
- Ask questions to make sure you have all of the information you need to be prepared and best support your child.

Glossary:

Contrast – liquid used to better see pictures of the inside of the body

Intravenous line (IV) – small tube that gives the body liquids and medicines

Anesthesia – medicine used to make people sleep and feel/remember nothing during tests

Anesthesiologist – doctor giving anesthesia

Call 323.361.7675 to ask for a Child Life Specialist who can talk to your child about the test or give support.



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