

Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan: 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.

Planning ahead: If you plan to go into the test room with your child, please bring another adult with you to watch your children. Visiting children must stay in the waiting room and may not be left alone.

What will happen during the test?

- If your child needs contrast for the test he/she will get an intravenous line (IV) placed before the CT scan and/or drink contrast mixed with juice or powerade.
- A staff member will bring you and your child into the CT room where one adult family member will be able to stay with your child. If you are pregnant, you will need to leave the room during test.
- Your child may need to change their clothes into a hospital gown depending on type of CT scan.
- The radiology tech will help your child onto procedure bed and into the right position for pictures and place a safety belt across his/her body. A red light can be seen coming from the machine when setting up to help the tech know where your child needs to be lying.
- The bed will move into the machine until the body part they are taking pictures of is under the camera.
- The camera makes a swishing noise when it's on.
- Your child will need to lie completely still for 5-10 minutes during the CT scan to be able to get clear pictures of the inside of their body.
- If your child needs IV contrast, then a small machine will be connected to the IV to give contrast during part of the test. The contrast does not hurt when going in the IV, but may feel warm.
- Once the radiology tech is done taking the pictures your child is able to go home. If your child had an IV placed, the nurse will take it out before you go 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.
- Have your child practice holding still at home before 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 during the test (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

Radiology tech – person who takes pictures of the body

Radiologist – doctor taking and looking at pictures from test

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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