



## CT Scan (Computerized Tomography)

A CT Scan uses X-ray beams that pulse through the body, allowing for multiple views in much greater detail than a standard X-ray. Each pulse lasts only a fraction of a second and represents a photographic “slice” of the organ or area being studied. CT Scanning allows doctors to obtain valuable information about almost any body organ — such as the liver, kidneys, lungs, and heart — plus blood vessels, the abdominal cavity, bones, and the spinal cord.

During the scan, patients may be injected with a contrast material that makes blood vessels and organs more visible. The contrast may also be used so doctors can more accurately evaluate blood flow, detect tumors, and identify areas of inflammation.

**For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 715-939-1594.**



### CT Scan Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What will I experience during the exam?**

Before your exam, our registered technologist will meet with you to review your medical history, ask questions, and describe the procedure to you in detail. At this time, if you have any questions or concerns about your ability to lie still during the exam, please inform the technologist. You'll be asked to lie still on the CT table and instructed on how to breathe. Depending on the test your physician ordered, the technologist may give you an intravenous contrast injection. Throughout the procedure, you will feel the CT table move. You will also be asked to hold yourself in a certain position at times. While CT exams aren't painful, if at any time you experience discomfort, you'll be able to let the technologist know.

#### **What is the Intravenous CT Contrast Injection?**

The contrast is injected into a vein using a power injector during a specific period in the CT exam. The contrast circulates the blood stream, through the heart and arteries, capillaries and veins, to essentially “enhance” the tissue structure of your organs so they appear highlighted on the CT images for a more precise diagnosis.

#### **What are common side effects of the Intravenous CT Contrast Injection?**

The most common side effect is a warm sensation during the injection and a “metallic” taste in the mouth. These are only passing sensations and usually last less than a minute or so. For some patients, itching or hives (bumps on the skin) may occur and can last from several minutes to several hours after the injection. This can be treated with medication at the time of the exam or after by the referring physician. More serious reactions, although rare, may include breathing difficulty or swelling and are treated immediately.

## CT Scan Frequently Asked Questions cont...

### **Is the Intravenous CT Contrast Injection safe?**

Absolutely. We use “non-ionic” contrast, which has a much lower incidence of allergic reaction than the older “ionic” contrast.

### **Am I a high-risk candidate for the Intravenous CT Contrast Injection?**

If you have a history of allergies, diabetes, asthma, or kidney problems, or suffer from a heart or thyroid condition, you could be predisposed to a higher risk of reactions or complications following the IV. Please inform our technologist prior to your exam at which time we will determine if you will require pre-medication or if we will preclude you from taking the intravenous CT contrast injection.

### **How long does a CT Scan take?**

An actual CT scan typically takes 5-15 minutes. However, patients who are scheduled for abdomen/pelvis CT scans will be required to drink an Oral Contrast Drink the night before and the morning of the exam.

### **What is the Oral Contrast Drink?**

The oral contrast drink is for patients who are having a CT scan of the abdomen/pelvis area. The barium-based drink essentially “enhances” the gastrointestinal tract so it can be better defined on the CT images.

### **What happens after my scan?**

Once your exam is over, you can resume your normal activities. Increase your fluid intake by 32 oz. and resume your normal diet. Your results will be sent to your referring physician.

