



# CT/CAT Scan



## What is a CAT/CT Scan?

CT or "CAT" scans are special x-ray tests that show cross-sectional images of the body using x-rays and a computer. These images allow the radiologist to look at the inside of the body. A CAT Scan is sometimes compared to looking into a loaf of bread by cutting the loaf into thin slices. When the image slices are reassembled by a computer, the result is a very detailed view of the body's interior.

## To Prepare:

1. Go to hospital registration first. Bring your picture ID and your insurance information and card.
2. Before the exam is done, you will be asked questions about your medical history and medications you are taking. Be sure and bring a list of all your medications with you. Tell us if you have any allergies or had any prior problems with x-ray dyes or numbing medicines.
3. Wear comfortable clothes. You may be asked to put on a patient gown.

Your Exam:  Oral Contrast

IV Contrast

No Contrast

## Different Types of CAT/CT Scans

Different exams require a special dye, called contrast, to be delivered into the body before the test starts. Contrast highlights specific areas inside the body, which creates a clearer image. The oral contrast will be given to you by drinking it. IV contrast will require a temporary IV to be started. A CAT/CT Scan can also be done without contrast. Note: Women of child bearing age may be required to have a pregnancy test prior to the exam.

- **Oral Contrast:** Come to the hospital at least 2 hours before your test is scheduled. Do not eat or drink anything 3 hours before you must start drinking the contrast liquid. You will have to sip slowly on the CT drink for **2 hours before your exam starts**. While you are drinking the CT contrast, you will be sent to lab for a creatinine (blood test). The lab results will be back by the time your drink is to be finished and the exam is to start. The CT drink helps mark your intestinal tract so the radiologist may interpret your scans properly. It takes awhile for the drink to coat your stomach and small intestine. You MAY use the restroom as often as needed. Some patients may prefer to pick up the CT drink before the scheduled appointment date and drink at home. Please contact us if you prefer this option. We will give you instructions on how to pick up the CT drink.
- **IV Contrast:** *\*If you have already had lab work for this test, arrive at the hospital at least 15 minutes prior to your exam time, otherwise* come to the hospital at least 1 hour before your test is scheduled. Do not eat or drink anything 3 hours before IV contrast is ordered. You will be sent to lab for a creatinine (blood test). Dye will be injected into one of your hand or arm veins. This helps certain diseases and organs show up better on the images.
- **No Contrast:** Come to the hospital at least 15 minutes prior to your exam time. If NO contrast is ordered you won't be required to drink or to get a blood test prior to the CT scan.

## What will I feel during and after the procedure?

- CT exams are generally painless, fast and easy.
- You will have to lie very still with your arms above your head. If you have a hard time staying still, are claustrophobic or have chronic pain, ask your doctor to prescribe something for you.
- If an IV contrast material is used, you will feel a slight pin prick when the needle is inserted into your vein. You may have a warm, flushed sensation during the injection of the contrast and a metallic taste in your mouth that lasts for a few minutes. Some patients may have a sensation like they have to urinate but this subsides quickly.
- If the contrast material is swallowed, you may find the taste mildly unpleasant. You can expect to experience a sense of abdominal fullness. In this case, be patient, as the mild discomfort will not last long.
- You will be alone in the exam room during the scan. However, the technologist will be able to see, hear and speak with you at all times.
- After a CT exam, you can return to your normal activities. If you received contrast material, you may be given special instructions.
- Contact your doctor in for the results of the exam. *\*If you have any questions please call us 815-625-0400, Ext. # 4508*