

PATIENT EDUCATION FOR C.T. SCAN

What is a CT or CAT scan?

A CT scan is a radiology test that uses X-ray to see structures inside the body. The CT scanner is a “doughnut shaped” machine that the patient lies down on a table and the body part is placed inside the machine in order to obtain images. The pictures are called slices. This scan can see many body parts that regular X-ray cannot see well.

My doctor ordered my test “with contrast”. What is that?

CT contrast can be two different types of contrast and depending on what your physician has ordered depends on what type you may receive. The two types are oral and IV contrast. Oral contrast will help the doctor see the GI tract (intestines) and IV contrast will help see many other organs such as kidneys and liver. In some cases you will receive both types of contrast. The oral contrast must be in your system for at least 45 minutes before the scan is performed.

What is IV Dye?

IV dye is the contrast that is used to see organs such as your kidneys and liver. It is placed through an IV. This dye contains iodine. If you have had an allergy to IV dye or iodine, please inform your physician when she/he is ordering the scan.

What if I am allergic to IV dye or iodine?

Your doctor can decide to give you pre-medication prior to the test. It is very important that you take this medicine at the correct times so it will work. You will be scanned at one of the hospitals if you are to be given IV Contrast and are pre-medicated. Your doctor may also decide not to give you the dye at all.

Will I need lab work?

Some patients will need labs drawn before the test to determine how well the kidneys are functioning. The labs can be drawn at the time the test is ordered but the results will take at least 45 minutes to an hour to be processed. If a patient has had labs drawn in the last 30 days and the kidney function is normal those lab results may be used.

How long will my test take?

Once you are in the CT suite your test should take approximately 10-15 minutes. Some times it can take longer if the radiologist needs delayed images.

What do I need to do before my test?

There are no restrictions on food or drink for a CT. You can take your normal medicines before your test. If your physician gave you orders or instructions please bring them with you.

I might be pregnant. Can I still have the test?

We normally do not do CT scans on patients that are pregnant unless the physician believes it is a risk to the mother not to have the test done. If you think you are pregnant please tell your physician and they can order a pregnancy test to determine that. If you are then they can discuss the risks of the procedure. It is your decision whether to have the test performed.

I have a pacemaker. Can I have a CT scan?

Yes. You can have a CT scan if you have any un-removable metal in your body. If you have jewelry, metal on your clothing, and metal dental work we may ask you to remove them for the test. The technologist will instruct you if we need you to do that.

Is the procedure dangerous?

There are risks to any medical procedure. The scan does use X-rays but we will use the lowest amount possible to obtain a clear scan. The contrast is like any medication. You could possibly have an allergic reaction. If you have an allergy history please talk to you physician before the test is scheduled. If you did not tell your physician please tell the technologist performing your scan.

How can I get my results?

Only you physician can give your results to you. Please contact them for all results. The results should be available within 24-48 hours.



Northeast Georgia Health System • *Imaging Services* • www.nghs.com/Imaging

Imaging Center Gainesville
770-219-1300

Imaging Center Braselton
770-848-6150

NGMC Main Campus
770-219-8035