

CT Scan

A diagnostic procedure that uses specialized X-rays and a high-speed computer

What is It?

Computed Tomography is commonly referred to as a CT scan. A CT scan is a diagnostic imaging procedure that uses a combination of X-rays and computer technology to produce images of the inside of the body. It shows detailed images of any part of the body, including the bones, muscles, fat, organs and blood vessels.

CT scans are more detailed than standard X-rays. In standard X-rays, a beam of energy is aimed at the body part being studied. A plate behind the body part captures the variations of the energy beam after it passes through skin, bone, muscle and other tissue. While much information can be obtained from a regular X-ray, a lot of detail about internal organs and other structures is not available.



In CT, the X-ray beam moves in a circle around the body. This allows many different views of the same organ or structure and provides much greater detail. The X-ray information is sent to a computer that interprets the X-ray data and displays it in two-dimensional form on a monitor. Newer technology and computer software makes three-dimensional images possible.

CT scans may be performed to help diagnose tumors, investigate internal bleeding, or check for other internal injuries or damage. CT can also be used for a tissue or fluid biopsy.

The amount of radiation dose used in a CT scan is small. You may want to ask your provider about the amount of radiation used and the risks related to your particular situation.

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, you should notify your health care provider.

Before the Procedure

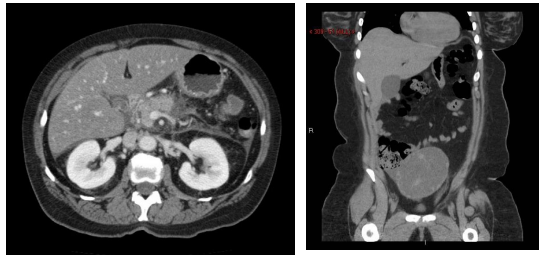
Before you come for your CT scan, you may be asked not to eat or drink anything. You may also be instructed to drink oral contrast prior to your scan in order to enhance the images of your GI tract.

We kindly ask that you do not bring children to your appointment. Please make arrangements for child care in advance, as our staff cannot be available or responsible for supervising children.

The Procedure

A technologist will talk with you and explain the exam and will ask a few questions about your medical history and prior surgeries.

The technologist will make you as comfortable as possible on the CT exam table and will also inform you when to hold your breath, if needed. Some CT exams require intravenous contrast or "X-ray dye" in order to enhance the view of vascular structures such as your liver, spleen, kidneys, aorta, or brain. Therefore, an IV may need to be inserted.



Example of CT images of the abdomen



Example of CT images of the knee

After the Procedure

After the CT Scan, the radiologist will interpret your exam and a report will be sent to your provider. You should feel no ill effects from your procedure and should be able to go about your daily routine. If you have any concerns following your exam, please contact the radiology department or your provider. Please ask your provider about your test results.

For more information, please contact the Radiology Department at 712-546-3394.