

CT Scan

What is a CT scan?

A **Computerized Tomography (CT) scan** is a special test that creates high quality pictures of the body using X-rays and a computer.

The pictures from a CT scan allow the doctor to look at the inside of your body. During the procedure, we take x-ray images of your body and then the computer creates cross-sectional images or “slices” of the inside of your body. It is similar to slicing a loaf of bread and being able to look at the inside of the loaf. By viewing these images, the doctor can look right at the area of interest.

We may use a dye (colourless liquid) to highlight parts of your body better under the x-ray. Not everyone will need this dye. The radiologist will decide what is best for you before your scan, based on your doctor’s recommendations.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

Please let your doctor know if:

1. You are currently taking any medicines, including prescription or over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, or blood thinners. Your doctor will let you which medicines, if any, to stop taking before your scan.
2. You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are breast feeding.
 - If you are pregnant, we may cancel your CT scan to reduce the risk of radiation exposure to your fetus.
 - At this time, it is not clear if the dye has any effect on breast milk.
3. You have any allergies. It is important to share if you are allergic to local anesthetics (freezing medicine) or any type of dye containing iodine.
 - If you do have known allergies, we suggest you wear your MedicAlert® bracelet on the day of your visit.

On the day of your CT scan:

Please bring the following to the hospital:

- Your health card (OHIP) and photo ID.
- All the medicines you are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, in their original containers.

Do not bring jewelry or other valuables.

- Take your medicines as your doctor advised.
- Follow the instructions your doctor gave to you about how to prepare for your scan.
- If you need support, you may have someone with you before the procedure.
- Before the procedure, we may ask you to remove all your clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- Please remove any jewelry, dental appliances, eyeglasses, hair clips or metal objects you are wearing that may interfere with the images.

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What can I expect during the procedure?

If the radiologist recommends a dye for your CT scan, we may give it to you in liquid form to drink (oral contrast) or we may inject it into your vein (IV dye) before the procedure.

We regularly give both oral and IV dye for the procedure. The liquid dye will help us see your stomach or bowel (intestines) better under the x-ray. The IV dye will help us see your blood vessels.

If we give you the dye through an IV, you may feel a warm sensation throughout your body or have a metallic taste in your mouth. This is the dye travelling through your blood vessels. This is normal.

We will bring you into a scanning room for your scan.

Once we have finished the scan, if we gave you an IV, we will remove it. We will ask you to apply some pressure on the site to prevent bleeding.

You will be in the hospital for about 1/2 hour to 4 hours. The actual procedure on the scanning table will take from 15 to 40 minutes, depending on your scan.

What can I expect after the procedure?

- If you only had the scan, you may dress and go home soon after the scan. We may ask you to stay for 10 minutes after the scan for observation.
- If you have also had a procedure done with your scan, you will need to stay 2 to 4 hours after your procedure.
- Your doctor will receive the results of your scan in about a week.

How do I care for myself at home?

- Unless you are on a special fluid restriction diet, you may drink lots of fluid to help flush the dye out of your body faster.
- You may resume all your regular activities.



Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you notice any of the following:

- You feel different or worse than you did before your CT scan (for example, nausea (sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)).
- You are consistently sneezing for 15 minutes.
- You suddenly have a rash.
- Your eyes are itchy.

If you have trouble breathing or are short of breath, call 9-1-1.