

Computed Tomography (CT) – Your Role in Patient Safety

Computed Tomography (CT)

A CT (or CAT) scan uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of your body. The scan is painless and usually takes 10 to 30 minutes, depending on the part of your body being scanned. CT scans can help to diagnose medical conditions, check existing conditions and is used to prepare for other tests and treatments. CT can also be used to guide doctors during certain procedures (such as biopsy), where a tissue sample is needed for analysis.

CT Safety

You may be concerned about your exposure to the amount of radiation during the tests. Special care is taken during the scan to use the lowest radiation dose possible. Lead protection is given, when needed. State-of-the-art x-ray systems are used so that those parts of your body not being imaged receive minimal or no radiation exposure.

Contrast Media

To see certain parts of the body clearly, such as your intestines or blood vessels, we may use contrast media (x-ray dye). Contrast medium can be given to you in different ways. It can be swallowed in the form of a drink or injected into your bloodstream. In rare cases, contrast media can cause an adverse reaction. If contrast is needed, we will ask you some questions about your medical history and check your suitability before your test.

X-rays and Pregnancy

CT scans are not recommended for pregnant women as the x-rays could harm the unborn child. Before having a scan, tell your doctor or other health care provider if there is a chance you may be pregnant. This decision is made carefully by your doctor and our staff. Female patients between the ages of 10 and 55 years (provincial guidelines) are asked if there is any possibility of pregnancy before having a CT examination.

Medications

You should never stop taking any prescribed medications, unless you are advised by your physician or health care provider responsible for your care.

Preparation

In some CT examinations, you may be asked to follow some instructions to prepare for the test. You will be advised of any instructions to be followed before your procedure.

Let Us Know if You Are:

- Have had a previous reaction to contrast media
- Have any allergies, heart, kidney, liver problems or diabetes
- Are anxious about your CT examination
- Have any questions or concerns about pregnancy
- Unable to perform any of the instructions required for the test, before your appointment.

Safety Tips

- Ensure you inform the staff of any slip, trip or falls you may have had within the last six months
- Bring any mobility aide you use at home with you to assist in your examinations (canes, walkers, etc.)
- Help promote infection control in the hospital by using the hand sanitizer, from the stations or dispensers provided

Self-Screen

Please reschedule your appointment if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble Breathing

To ensure your safety, please inform staff if you are uncomfortable or need assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-469-6580 ext. 2310.