



St. Luke's Imaging Services Patient/Family Information

CT Scan

Head/Sinus/Orbits/Soft Tissue Neck

What is a CT scan?

A CT – *computed tomography* – or CAT scan is a valuable procedure which combines x-ray and computer technology to make a clear picture of the organs, bones and tissues inside your body.

The CT exam involves tiny x-ray pictures, called "slices," taken in a circular movement around the body. The computer pulls the slices together and puts them on a video monitor for a radiologist – a doctor who specializes in radiologic medicine. The image represents a cross-section of the particular area and can provide a "view" that may not be visible on a regular x-ray.

Special Note

Before the exam, please tell your doctor if you are or think you may be pregnant or are nursing.

It is also important to inform the CT technologist if you have any allergies or have had a reaction to x-ray dye in the past.

Preparation

If x-ray dye will be used for your exam, you should not eat any solid food four (4) hours before your exam. You may, however, drink clear liquids, including water, tea, clear gelatin, lemon-lime soda, orange or grape punch (not juice) and broth. Your doctor may also have other instructions for you. If you are on any medications, take them prior to your test with a small sip of water.

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

It is important to not wear any metal objects, such as hair pins or earrings, on your head.

If you are 60 or older, have diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney disease or have undergone an exam within the previous seven days where contrast material (x-ray dye) was injected into your body, you will need to have a blood test before this procedure to check for kidney function.

What Happens During the Test?

You will be positioned on an exam table by lying on your back. Your head or neck will be placed in a special holder and it is very important to remain completely still during the scan. The table will be moved into the machine where the scans will be done. Except for the movement of the table, you will not feel anything.

You may be injected with an x-ray dye to make internal structures more visible. If so, you may feel warm and flushed for a few minutes, which is very normal. However, if you begin to itch, become short of breath or uncomfortable, please tell the CT technologist.

After the Exam:

- You may go back to your regular diet after the exam, unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
- If you received the x-ray dye through an IV, you should drink plenty of fluids along with resuming a regular diet. The dye will go out through your urine and you will not be able to see it.

When Will I Know the Results?

The radiologist will review and interpret the scan shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Outpatient Instructions

Please register 30 minutes before the scheduled exam time at the Outpatient Registration desk at the West Entrance. After registering, testing will be done in the Imaging Services department on the second floor. Please use the elevators past registration on the left.

Name _____

Exam date/time _____