

Computerized Tomography (CT) Scan

What is a CT scan?

A CT is a scan that takes detailed pictures of the inside of the body.

How do I prepare for the CT?

- If your child's scan is scheduled with oral contrast, a nurse will call and give you directions about when your child can eat and drink before the CT.
- Children are not allowed in the waiting room without an adult. If you will be in the CT room with your child, please bring another adult with you to watch your other children.

What is contrast?

- Contrast is a dye (or liquid) that is used to highlight specific areas in the body more clearly in your child's CT scan.
- If your child needs contrast for the CT scan, before the scan:
 - An intravenous line (IV) will be placed and/or
 - Your child will be given apple juice, clear soda or Powerade® mixed with contrast. Your child will be asked to drink it slowly over a 2-3 hour period.



What if my child needs IV contrast?

- If your child needs IV contrast, an intravenous line (IV) will be placed. An intravenous line (IV) is a soft, flexible tube placed inside a vein. IV lines are used to give your child medicine or fluids.
 - The nurse will look for a good vein (usually on the hands or arms) to place the IV.
 - They will clean the skin and spray a special cold spray on it to help with pain.
 - Then, the nurse will use a needle to place a small tube into your child's vein.
 - Once the IV is in place, the needle will be taken out, leaving only a small, soft tube in your child.
 - The nurses will put special water in the IV to make sure it's in the right place.
 - The IV will be taped to help it stay in place and to keep your child from moving it.
- If your child needs IV contrast, a small machine will be connected to the IV to give the contrast. The contrast does not hurt when going into the IV, but it may feel warm.

What will happen during the CT?

A staff member will bring you and your child into the CT room. One adult family member will be able to stay with your child. If you are pregnant, you will need to leave the room during the CT. Depending on the type of CT scan, your child may need to change into a hospital gown.

Radiology

- A radiology tech will help your child onto the procedure bed and position them for pictures. A red light from the machine helps the tech know where your child needs to lie. The tech will place a safety belt across your child's body.
- The bed will move into the machine until the body part being studied is under the camera.
- The camera will make a noise when it's on.
- Your child will need to lie completely still for about 2-4 minutes. This will ensure that the CT scan gets the best pictures.
- The CT scan is complete once the radiology tech is done taking pictures. If an IV was placed, a nurse will remove it. Then you will be discharged home or the Transport Team will take you back to your inpatient room.

How can I help my child?

Explain to your child what will happen during the scan. Use simple words that are familiar to you and your child.

- Be honest with your child about the scan.
- Have your child practice holding still at home before the scan.
- Bring comforting things that your child enjoys from home, such as a favorite toy, blanket, book, etc.
- Praise and support your child during the CT (i.e., Say, "Good job holding still," and acknowledge their feelings).
- Ask questions. Make sure you have all the information you need to be prepared and to best support your child.

Glossary

Contrast: a liquid used to better see pictures of the inside of the body.

Intravenous line (IV): An intravenous line (IV) is a soft, flexible tube placed inside a vein. IV lines are used to give your child medicine or fluids.

Radiologist: a doctor who takes and looks at pictures from the scan.

Radiology tech: a person who takes pictures of the body.

If you would like a Child Life Specialist to talk to your child about the scan or give support, call 323-361-7675