

Care Gram

Computed Tomography (CT) Scan

Date of Test: _____ Test Time: _____

Welcome

Welcome to Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Radiology Department. Your doctor has requested a Computerized Tomography (CT) scan. This advanced X-ray will be done by a radiographer. This test produces detailed cross-sectional images or pictures of the head, spine, chest, abdomen, and other areas of the body.

How the Test Works

The scanner has a doughnut-shaped ring that is open. You will be lying on an exam table. The sensors in the scanner detect X-rays passing through your body. The information from the sensors is processed by computers. Then it is displayed as a picture on a video screen. You may have a contrast material injected into your vein. You may also be asked to drink an oral contrast agent before a CT scan of the abdomen and/or pelvis. The oral contrast agent is a barium sulfate suspension that you drink at different time intervals.

Allowing Time

The test usually takes about 15 to 30 minutes. You should allow more time for your entire visit. The time that you arrive depends on the area of your body that will be scanned. You may be asked to arrive anywhere from 30 minutes to 3 hours before your scheduled test to receive the oral contrast agent. Please see the preparation section for the times. If the CT scan is your only test, you may pick up the oral contrast ahead of time.

Special Instructions for Outpatients

These instructions only apply to you if your doctor has ordered hydration therapy prior to your CT scan. Your doctor may have ordered for you to have an injection of a contrast material into your vein. Guidelines have been established requiring certain individuals to have a blood test prior to having this injection. You may be asked to go to the Laboratory to have a blood sample taken prior to having your CT scan. This blood test is to provide us with information regarding your kidney function because the body depends on the kidneys to remove the contrast material. If the blood test shows that the kidney function is not normal, you may be asked to return to the Hospital on a different day. We will schedule you to come to the Hospital early to have IV fluids before your scan. You will report to the Outpatient Clinic on the 5th floor prior to your scan for about 4 hours of fluids (hydration) and then again immediately after the scan for 2 more hours. **We ask that you be aware that the total time spent at the Hospital on that day may be up to 8 hours.** You may eat or drink up to 3 hours before the scan unless



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you have been advised differently by your doctor or the Radiology Department, and then you are free to eat after the scan is complete.

Preparation

- Head (eyes, ears, etc.)
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 30 minutes before the test.
- Sinuses
 - No prep
 - Arrive 20 minutes before the test.
- Chest
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 30 minutes before the test.
- Spine
 - No preparation.
 - Arrive 30 minutes before the test.
 - Please bring any outside films or CDs and reports that relate to your test.
- Extremities
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 30 minutes before the test.
 - Please bring any outside films or CDs and reports that relate to your test.
- Abdomen and Pelvis (together)
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 3 hours before the test.
- Abdomen Only (liver, spleen, pancreas, kidney)
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 1 hour before the test.
- Pelvis Only (retroperitoneal)
 - Nothing to eat or drink 3 hours before the test.
 - Arrive 3 hours before the test.
- Biopsies
 - Nothing to eat or drink after midnight.
 - If you are on a blood thinner, aspirin, or any medication with aspirin in it, talk with your doctor about when to stop taking this medication.
 - Report to Surgery at the time told to you by surgery staff.
 - Please bring any outside films or CDs and reports that relate to your test.

Your Role

1. Relax during the test. It is important to hold still and hold your breath when asked. Holding still helps make the clearest images or pictures.
2. Parents of small children who need this test will need to be patient, yet firm. This test can be challenging for everyone. You may stay in the room with the child during the test. Talk to your child before the test to help him/her understand what to expect.

3. If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, be sure to let your doctor know this before the test begins.
4. It is important to notify the registered nurse (R.N.) or radiographer if you have a history of kidney disease, if you take an oral diabetic medication, or if you take a blood thinning medication.

Registering

Please report directly to the Radiology Department on the first floor of LMH. Come to this area 30 minutes to 3 hours before your scheduled test time. See the times listed with the preparation except for biopsies.

During a CT Scan

- For the test, you may be asked to put a hospital gown on. You will need to remove jewelry, hair clips, clothing and dentures. You will be asked to lie on a narrow table. The radiographer will then position the area of your body to be studied inside the scanner. The X-ray tube will rotate around you.
- As the test begins, you may hear humming, buzzing, or clicking sounds from the CT scanner. The table may move to position you for a new scan.
- Radiology personnel will observe you during the test from the CT Control Room. You may talk with the staff through an intercom.
- The injection may make you:
 - Feel warm and flushed,
 - Have a metallic taste in the mouth, or
 - Feel the need to urinate.These are normal. They will last only 1-2 minutes and are not cause for concern.
- ***Please let the radiographer know if you begin to: itch, feel short of breath, have problems swallowing, or are uncomfortable.***

After the Test

- If you were receiving hydrating IV fluids, you will return to the Outpatient Clinic to finish your infusion.
- If you received a contrast agent, it will be removed through your urine and should not discolor your urine or stool.
- Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to help your body eliminate the contrast agent. If your doctor has restricted your fluids, please check with him/her about this.
- You may return to your regular diet, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor, or unless you have other tests.

Finding Out the Results

The radiologist will study your test and give the impression to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Reminder

- If you have any questions about your test, please call (740) 348-4710.
- Go to the Radiology Department on the first floor 30 minutes to 3 hours before your test depending on preparation instructions. For biopsies, go to the surgery area at the time told to you by surgery staff.