

Computed Tomography Scan (CT Scan)

(without sedation)

Preparation for Children and their Families



What is a CT Scan?

A CT scan is a special way to take pictures of the inside of your child's body using a large x-ray camera and a computer. The CT scanner looks like a square with a round hole in the middle. The computer that processes the information from the scan is in a separate room where the CT technologist sits. The CT scanner will not touch your child while the picture is being taken.

What Will Happen During the CT Scan?

- Your child will need to remove anything with metal before the CT scan begins (clothing with zippers, snaps, glitter or rhinestones, eyeglasses, belts, cell phones, iPods...).
- Your child will lie on a special bed that moves up, down, back, and forth through the hole in the machine. Some children go into the CT scanner head first, others feet first. This depends on what part of your child's body needs to be examined.
- The CT technologist will help your child feel as comfortable as possible. The room often feels cold. The technologist can give your child a warm blanket to help him/her stay warm.
- Your child will need to lie completely still (like a statue) to get the best pictures. The technologist will place padding on either side of your child's head if he/she needs a reminder to lay still. The scan takes less than one minute.
- During some CT scans pieces of soft foam are used to protect your child's chest, neck, or pelvis.
- One caregiver may be with your child during the scan to provide support and comfort. This option is not available if the caregiver is pregnant.
- Some children need medicine called "contrast" for their pictures. Depending on the type of pictures needed, your child's doctor will decide if he/she needs contrast and if it will be given through an IV or in a drink.
- An IV is a tiny tube that the nurse will put into a vein in your child's hand or arm.

If needed, the I.V. will be placed using the following steps:

- A stretchy rubber band (called a "tourniquet") will be tied on your child's arm to help the nurses look for a vein (or blue line under your skin). This rubber band will feel like a tight hug on your child's arm.
 - A soft, wet wipe to clean the skin.
 - Special "freezy" spray. This spray feels very cold but helps make the pinch easier.
 - Buzzy vibrating distraction is another option to help alleviate pain.
 - A small needle to put a tiny tube into your vein. Remember the cold spray and/or Buzzy will help make this easier and the needle will come out right away.
 - Sticky tape to hold the small plastic tube in place after the needle comes out.
- Your child can choose to watch or look away during the I.V. Some kids like to talk with someone or look at a special toy for distraction.
 - If it is necessary for your child to drink the contrast, the technologist will give options for flavors. After your child drinks the contrast, you will be asked to wait 1-2 hours before the scan will begin.

What You/Your Child Will See:

- Red lights: Help the technologist to position your child's body for the pictures.
- Green lights: Appear inside the camera when the machine is ready to scan.

What You/Your Child Will Hear:

- The camera inside the machine moves in a circle and makes a high pitched humming sound before and during pictures.
- If you feel that your child will not be able to complete the scan while awake, please speak to your doctor prior to appointment to discuss the option of sedation.



What Will Happen After the CT Scan:

- If your child has an IV, it will be removed. Your child will feel pressure with gauze before a band-aid is placed on your child's arm.
- Your child's doctor will receive results and contact you within 24 hours of the scan.
- Your child can resume normal activity, unless he/she was sedated.

General Preparation Guidelines Based on Age:

- Research shows that children who are prepared in advance are less anxious and better able to cooperate during medical exams and procedures.
- You can help your child feel prepared by answering questions using clear and honest answers based on the detail provided here.
- We recognize that all children are individuals. You know your child best and can use this information as a guideline when preparing him/her.

Child's Age:

2 years
3-5 years
6-10 years
11 and older

When to Prepare Your Child:

On the way to your appointment
The day before your appointment
A few days before
Approximately a week or two prior

Child Life Specialists are available to help prepare and support your child.

Please call Child Life at 773-702-1230 for assistance or visit us online for more information:

<http://www.uchicagokidshospital.org/specialties/child-life/>