

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

CT (computed tomography), sometimes called CAT scan, uses special x-ray equipment to obtain image data from different angles around the body, and then uses computer processing of the information to show a cross-section of body tissues and organs.

CT scanning is particularly useful because it can show several types of tissue—lung, bone, soft tissue and blood vessels—with great clarity.

Using specialized equipment and expertise to create and interpret CT scans of the body, radiologists can more easily diagnose problems such as cancers, cardiovascular disease, infectious disease, trauma and musculoskeletal disorders.

To prepare for a CT scan, you should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. Metal objects can affect the image, so avoid clothing with zippers and snaps.

You also may be asked to remove hairpins, jewelry, eyeglasses, hearing aids and any removable dental work, depending on the part of the body that is being scanned.

You may be asked not to eat or drink anything for one or more hours before the exam. Women should always inform their doctor or x-ray technologist if there is any possibility that they are pregnant.

A CT examination usually takes five to 15 minutes. When the exam is over, you may be asked to wait until the images are examined to determine if more images are needed.

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HR We will have your results back to your doctor within 48 hours.

Humboldt General Hospital provides state-of-the-art radiology services to men, women and children of all ages. Ensuring the most accurate diagnostic results is our goal. Services are performed in a timely and compassionate manner; meeting our patients' needs is our top priority.

Every member of Humboldt General Hospital's radiology team has achieved his or her registry through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Registration is the one-time process of initially recognizing individuals who have satisfied certain standards within a profession. A person is certified by the ARRT after meeting educational preparation standards, complying with ethics standards, and passing a comprehensive exam.

Clinical excellence is just one part of the department's three-pronged "Promise to the Community." Humboldt General Hospital's Radiology Department also is committed to premium customer service, offering extended evening and weekend hours, as well as the most advanced technology possible for its nine modalities: MRI, CT Scan, X-Ray, Fluoroscopy, Vascular Ultrasound, Obstetrical Ultrasound, Cardiac Ultrasound, Mammography and Bone Densitometry.

We look forward to serving you. Please call Humboldt General Hospital's Radiology Department at (775) 623-5222, ext. 133, with any questions or concerns you may have, or to schedule an appointment.

"OUR PROMISE TO YOU"

- ✓ **CLINICAL EXCELLENCE**
- ✓ **PREMIUM CUSTOMER SERVICE**
- ✓ **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY**

HGH
Radiology

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CT SCAN



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COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY

at Humboldt General Hospital



WHY GET A CT SCAN?

Because it provides detailed, cross-sectional views of all types of tissue, CT is one of the best tools for studying the chest and abdomen. It is often the preferred method for diagnosing many different cancers, and CT examinations are often used to plan and properly administer radiation treatments for tumors, to guide biopsies and other minimally invasive procedures, and to plan surgery and determine surgical resectability.

CT can clearly show even very small bones, as well as surrounding tissues such as muscle and blood vessels. This makes it invaluable in diagnosing and treating spinal problems and injuries to the hands, feet and other skeletal structures.

CT images can also be used to measure bone mineral density for the detection of osteoporosis. In cases of trauma, CT can quickly identify injuries to internal organs. CT can also play a significant role in the detection, diagnosis and treatment of vascular diseases that can lead to stroke, internal bleeding, kidney failure, or even death.

HOW IS CT PERFORMED?

The technologist begins by positioning the patient on the CT table. The patient's body may be supported by pillows to help hold it still and in the proper position during the scan. As the study

proceeds, the table will move slowly into the CT scanner "doughnut." Depending on the area of the body being examined, the increments of movement may be so small that they are almost undetectable, or large enough that the patient feels the sensation of motion.

A CT examination often requires the use of different contrast materials to enhance the visibility of certain tissues or blood vessels. The contrast material may be injected through an IV directly into the blood stream, swallowed or administered by enema, depending on the type of examination.

Before administering the contrast material, the radiologist or technologist will ask whether the patient has any allergies, especially to medications or iodine, and whether the patient has a history of diabetes, asthma, a heart condition, kidney problems, or previous reaction to intravenous x-ray



contrast. These conditions may indicate a higher risk of reaction to the contrast material or potential problems eliminating the material from the patient's system after the exam.

WHAT WILL I EXPERIENCE?

CT scanning causes no pain, and with spiral CT, the need to lie still for any length of time is reduced. For different parts of the body, the patient preparation will be different. You may be asked to swallow either water or a positive contrast material, a liquid that allows the radiologist to better see the stomach, small bowel and colon. Some patients find the taste of the contrast material mildly unpleasant, but most can easily tolerate it.

Your exam may require the administration of the material by enema if the colon is the focus of the study. You will experience a sense of abdominal fullness and may feel an increasing need to expel the liquid. Be patient; the mild discomfort will not last long.

Commonly, a contrast material is injected into a vein to better define the blood vessels and kidneys, and to accentuate the appearance between normal and abnormal tissue in organs like the liver and spleen. Some people report feeling a flush of heat and sometimes a metallic taste in the back of the mouth. These sensations usually disappear within a minute or two. Some people experience a mild itching sensation. If it persists or is accompanied by hives (small bumps on the skin), the itch can be treated easily with medication.

You will be alone in the room during the scan; however, the technologist can see, hear and speak with you at all times. When scanning children, a parent may be allowed in the room with the patient to alleviate fear, but will be required to wear a lead apron to prevent radiation exposure.