

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



CT Scan of the Neck with Contrast

What is a CT scan of the neck?

Your doctor has suggested you/your child have a CT scan with contrast as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. A CT or CAT scan is a shortened name for computerized tomography. A CT scan takes pictures of the inside of the body. The pictures are more detailed than a typical x-ray. During a CT scan of the neck, pictures are taken of cross sections or slices of the structures in your body. When contrast is used during a CT scan of the neck, the structures are highlighted even more.

CT scans can help determine a diagnosis early. Your doctor will use this information to determine the best treatment for you.

How do you get ready for the test?

- ✓ For children under 18 years - **Do not eat 4 hours before the test is scheduled. You/your child may drink clear fluids only.** It is important that you drink enough clear liquids (like water) to be well hydrated prior to the test.
- ✓ For adults –**There is no food restriction for this scan.** It is important that you drink enough clear liquids (like water) to be well hydrated prior to the test.
- ✓ Wear clothing you can remove from the waist up. You will be given a gown to wear.
- ✓ Remove glasses, earrings, hearing aids and dental appliances before the sinus CT scan.
- ✓ Talk with your doctor before the test if you have a history of reactions to contrast in the past.
- ✓ If you have not had a recent blood test for creatinine, a finger-poke blood test may be done just prior to your scan.

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- ✓ Please arrive 20 minutes before the test is scheduled. The radiology technologist will ask you questions and have you complete a questionnaire.

What is done during the sinus CT scan?

The CT scan does not hurt. The radiology technologist will explain the CT scan to you before you start. Ask questions if you don't understand. Before the study you/your child will need to remove glasses, earrings, hearing aids and dental appliances. You will be given a hospital gown to wear. The technologist will start an IV. The IV will be used to give you the contrast media. The contrast media will be injected into the IV.

The CT scan does not hurt. You will feel a prick when the IV is started. Many people feel a warm "flush" as the contrast media is injected. This is normal and passes quickly.

The CT scanner includes a table you will lie on and a doughnut shaped ring. You will lie still on the table while it advances through the ring. The technologist will give you instructions during the test. While you hold still the table will move through the ring while pictures are taken. It is important to lie still while the images are taken. You will also be asked to refrain from swallowing for a few seconds while the pictures are taken.

Young children may have trouble lying still during the CT scan. If this is the case the child may be given medicine to make him or her sleepy first. This is done in the Pediatric Care Unit. If this is done first, a nurse will also be at the CT scan. If you are concerned your young child may not be able to hold still talk with your doctor before the CT scan.

How long will the test take?

A CT scan of the neck takes about 40 minutes. This includes 20 minutes for the test and 20 minutes for preparation.

How do you get to your test?

Your appointment is in radiology. Radiology is in on the third floor of the Smith Building. On the day of your test, first report to the Admissions Desk just inside the Main Entrance. Admissions will direct you to the appropriate location for your test. If you have questions, or will not be able to make your appointment, please call: 303-398-1611.