



HOSPITALS • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION



## COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT)

Please tell us before the test if your child has ever had a reaction to contrast (dye) or takes the medicine Metformin (Glucophage).

### What is Computed Tomography (CT)?

Computed Tomography (CT), sometimes called a CAT scan, uses x-rays and computers to create an image of the inside of your child's body.

### How are the pictures taken?

- Radiology staff will bring you and your child into the CT area.
- If your child needs contrast by mouth, we will mix it in juice or soda for your child to drink. Your child will drink the contrast over a 2 hour period.
- If intravenous contrast is needed, we will start an I.V. (a tube put into a vein in your child's hand, arm, or foot) before the test begins. When the contrast is given, it may make your child feel warm or sick to his stomach. These are normal feelings and usually go away within a few minutes.
- CT exams are very sensitive to movement, so it is important to lie perfectly still. Sedation may be necessary for young children or children who have a hard time holding still.
- Sedation, medicine that helps your child go to sleep for the test, may be given by mouth or through the I.V. if your child cannot be still.
- If your child is scheduled with sedation, you will be contacted with instructions on when your child needs to stop eating and drinking.
- Non-sedation patients cannot have anything to eat or drink 2 hours prior to contrast.
- Your child is then placed on a special bed with a safety belt over him. During the scan, the table moves slowly through the large ring shaped machine.

### Who performs the test?

A technologist, a person licensed and trained to take these special pictures, performs the scan and makes sure the pictures are of good quality.

### Who looks at the pictures?

A pediatric radiologist, a doctor specially trained in children's x-rays, looks at the pictures and sends a report to your child's doctor.

### Are there any risks?

- Radiation in general is a risk. However, the amount of radiation used is the smallest amount possible to get the best pictures.
- If your child gets contrast, there is a small chance of an allergic reaction (like a person allergic to bee stings). This can include hives, itching, sneezing, and trouble breathing or other more serious problems.
- Your child's nurse or technologist will discuss the risks of contrast (if given) with you before the test.
- If your child receives sedation, the sedation nurse or doctor will discuss risks with you before you are asked to give permission for the sedation.

### What happens after the test?

- The technologist or the nurse will give you any special instructions and tell you when your child can leave.
- If your child is sedated, he or she will need to stay until he is awake. This may take up to 2-3 hours.
- After the test, your child may eat or drink as usual, unless your child's doctor tells you not to feed him/her.
- If contrast was given, it will leave your child's body through their urine within 24 - 48 hours after the test. The color of the urine should remain normal. During this time frame, please make sure your child drinks a lot of water.



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### PREPARING MY CHILD

#### Infants

Although you cannot explain the test to your baby, you can help your baby feel more secure during the test if you:

- Bring a special blanket, toy or pacifier.
- Comfort him or her with your presence and voice.
- Bring along a bottle of juice or formula to give after the test is done.

#### Toddlers and preschool-age children

- Young children can become anxious about having a test done, so the best time to talk with your child is right before the test.
- On the day of the test, tell your child that he or she will be having some “pictures” taken, so the doctor can help them feel better.
- Use simple words and be honest.
- When you come to the hospital, bring a favorite book, toy or blanket.
- You may bring a snack for after the test.

#### School-age children

- On the day of the test, tell your child that he or she will be having some “pictures” taken, so the doctor can help them feel better.
- Use simple words. Be honest with your child and explain exactly what will happen.
- When you come to the hospital, bring along a favorite book, toy or game.
- You may bring a snack for after the test.

#### Photographs/Videos

If you want to take any pictures or videos, please discuss this with the technologist before your child is taken into the exam room.

**NOTE: Parents/guardians will be allowed to accompany the child into the exam room; other arrangements should be made for siblings. Women who are pregnant, or may be pregnant, will be asked to leave the exam room during the procedure. Please make sure that there is someone else available to accompany the child during the exam, if needed.**

Because the radiation from this test could possibly harm an unborn child, female patients age 10 and above will be required to take a pregnancy test before the exam can be performed.



**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away. This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.**

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