



Exam Duration:	Approximately 10-15 minutes	IV Required?	Only if ordered with IV contrast
Exam Preparation:	For CT without IV contrast: <i>No preparation required.</i> For CT with IV contrast: <i>Do not eat or drink 2 hours prior to the exam.</i>		

CT scans (or CAT scans) are quick, non-invasive diagnostic exams used to evaluate a wide variety of pathologies. CT may be used to diagnose or evaluate internal injuries from trauma, cancer, infectious disease, cardiovascular abnormalities, and a multitude of other conditions. The cross-sectional images provide a very detailed look at the internal anatomy of the body.

Head and neck CT exams are very common and are used to evaluate the brain, sinuses, facial bones, and structures of the neck.

Exam Procedure: Upon your arrival, a CT technologist will explain the exam in detail and ask questions about your relevant medical history. For exams ordered with IV contrast, an IV will be started in your arm if you do not already have one. You will lie on an imaging table on your back, with arms held down to your side. Depending on the exam to be performed, you may be asked to hold your head in a slightly uncomfortable position for a short time. The table will move in and out of the CT gantry as needed, giving instructions to hold your breath if needed. The entire exam generally takes 10-15 minutes.

IV Contrast Notes: Most CT exams can be ordered with or without IV contrast. If you have an iodine allergy, it is important to tell the technologist before your exam is performed. Most patients experience a warm flushed feeling when the contrast is administered along with a metallic taste. Patients may also experience a sensation like they have to urinate, but this is merely a side effect of the contrast and subsides quickly. Not all IVs are adequate for contrast injection; for example, butterfly IVs and certain small-gauge IVs may not be used.

Important: *Diabetic patients will need to stop taking oral medications containing metformin for a period of 48 hours following IV contrast injection. Other oral medications and insulin are not affected.*

Additional Notes: Patients will need to remove metal objects from the area of interest prior to the scan, including hearing aids, necklaces, earrings, and hair pins. Current creatinine levels must be available for patients who are diabetic or over the age of 60 if IV contrast is to be administered; these labs are performed in the CT department if necessary.

CT scans of the head and neck may be ordered as a CT Angiogram rather than a routine study. If so, refer to the CT Angiography exam information sheet.