



CAT (Computerized Tomography) Scan

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The following information is a brief description of the CAT Scan. If you have any questions after reading this information, please talk with your nurse.

What Is a CAT Scan?

A CAT scan is an x-ray procedure. During a CAT scan, a series of computerized images of an area of the body is taken while you lie on a table that moves slowly through the CAT scan machine. To help get clear pictures, contrast agents (dyes) may be given. Most scans are done with contrast material.

Why Is a CAT Scan Done?

- To determine the presence of a wide variety of conditions.
- To determine the effects of surgery, radiation therapy or chemotherapy.

Where Is the Test Done?

- Radiology Department, 2nd floor, Tisch Hospital.

How Long Does It Take?

- It takes about 60 minutes (1 hour) in total although the actual time in the machine is less than 5 minutes.

What Preparation Is Needed?

- If you are to receive a contrast agent, you will not be able to eat or drink for a period of time before the test. Your nurse will give you specific instructions.
- Tell your doctor and nurse if you have asthma, or are allergic to iodine or shellfish. Also, tell your doctor and nurse if you have had a previous reaction to contrast agents (dye) used for other medical tests. Your doctor will order medication to prevent an allergic reaction.



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- Tell your doctor and nurse if you are taking metformin (Glucophage). Your doctor will stop this medication for a 48 hour period before and after the test.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form after your doctor has explained the risks, benefits and alternatives.
- If you are to receive a contrast agent you must have an IV (Intravenous) line. If you don't have an IV, one will be started.
- **For Abdominal/Pelvic Scans Only:** You will be asked to drink a sports bottle sized container of flavored liquid to outline your intestines. This may be done either in the x-ray department or in your room before you go. You will be given specific instructions. None of the other CAT Scans require you to drink the contrast agent.
- Escort personnel will take you by wheelchair or stretcher to the Radiology Department.

What Happens During The Test?

- You will lie on your back on the scanning table.
- If you are having a CAT scan of the brain, your head will be held in place by straps but your face will not be covered.
- If you to receive IV contrast the staff will make sure that the IV is running properly. The IV line will be connected to a device that will inject the contrast at the appropriate time.
- 2 (two) rapid x-rays will be obtained. You will feel the table being slid into and out of the CAT Scanner in a single smooth motion.
- While you hold your breath there will be 3 to 4 passes under the scanner to generate the images. A computer generated voice will tell you when to hold your breath.
- The scanner makes no noise during the procedure.



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What Does It Feel Like?

- You will probably feel warm during the period the dye is injected. Some people experience a metallic taste. Occasionally, some people may experience brief nausea. All of these sensations will pass within 1 to 2 minutes. The doctor will be with you in the room while the contrast agent is being injected.

What Happens After The Test?

- You will be returned to your room.
- You can resume your usual diet and activity.
- Tell your nurse if you have any symptoms such as hives, etc.
- The results will be printed in 24 hours. If needed urgently, the results are immediately available to your doctor.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR QUESTIONS
