

Parent Information: CT Scans

What is a CT scan?

A CT scan (short for computed tomography) is a type of x-ray that shows up more than just the hard parts of the body like bone. The beam of x-rays moves in a circle around the body, providing different views of the same organ or tissue in much greater detail than a conventional x-ray exam.



Why does my baby need a CT scan?

Your baby has a problem that needs investigating further. The CT scan may tell us something that we can't find out from other tests.

How is the CT scan done?

Your baby will be put on a bed that slides in and out of the scanning machine. The CT scan usually takes about half an hour but will vary with the type of scan your baby is having. A nurse and/or doctor will remain with your baby at all times and monitor his/her condition.

Will there be any special preparation?

- It may be necessary to give sedation to your baby prior to the CT scan as he/she will need to lie still for the scan. If he/she is ventilated then this will be given through an intravenous drip. If your baby is not ventilated then the sedation can be given orally or rectally.
- If your baby is being fed then this may be stopped prior to the appointment for the scan to ensure that your baby is comfortable throughout the scan.
- Your baby will be transferred to the scanning department either in the transport incubator or a pram depending on his/her needs.

Will I be able to go with my baby?

You may go with your baby to the scanning department and you may also be allowed in the scanning room if the staff in the department considers it appropriate, though you would have to stay behind a screen during the actual scan.

When will I get the results?

Some things may show up immediately on the scan however a full report may take a few days, as the scans must be examined in detail. As soon as the doctors know the results they will explain the results to you.

Are there any risks?

The CT scan uses x-rays and there are known risks with radiation, however CT scans result in a low-level exposure and every effort is made to limit the amount of radiation babies may receive from a CT scan. Occasionally a dye or contrast is needed to show up a particular structure. This dye will need to be injected into an existing intravenous line and will show up the blood vessels of the structure under investigation. This 'dye' is extremely safe and should not affect your baby.

Consent

After you have read this information and once you have understood why your baby requires this test, the doctors may ask for your verbal consent. The doctors will discuss any questions you may have about the test.

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