



## *CT (CAT) Scan* **Patient Instruction Sheet**



**What is a CT Scan?** A CT scan is an x-ray picture of your body where images or pictures of the horizontal slices of your body are taken and read by a radiologist.

You lie down on a stretcher that is passed through a doughnut-like hole in an x-ray machine. During the test, you must lie still and may be asked to hold their breath for a several seconds from time to time. You may hear the scanner rotating during the study - this noise may be soft or more audible.

Depending on the type of study, the CT scanner or table will move slightly as low intensity x-ray beams are rotated at many angles around you. A computer collects the data from the

scanner, calculates the density of a given cross-sectional slice, and produces the image onto film. These images can help your physician or vascular surgeon make a diagnosis, and plan for surgery.

**Before the CT Scan, tell your physician if you:**

- Are pregnant or think you may be
- If you are allergic to x-ray contrast dye, iodine or shellfish

**Preparation for a CT Scan:**

- You may or may not need labwork drawn
- If you have renal insufficiency (your kidneys are not working to clear toxins), your doctor may want you to start N-Acetylcysteine or Mucomyst (a medication that helps protect the kidneys from the IV dye). This medication should be taken twice daily, starting the day before and the day of the CT scan.
- Unless directed by your physician to limit your fluids, increase your fluid intake both the day before and following the procedure to decrease the concentration of the dye on your kidneys.
- EATING:
- Have nothing to eat for 4 hours prior to your CT scan time
- If so instructed, you may have liquids in the 4 hours prior to the CT scan
- MEDICATIONS: Take your medications as directed by your healthcare provider:

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- If you take insulin, and have a morning CT scan, hold your insulin until you are able to eat.

If your CT scan is in the afternoon and you can eat in the morning, take your usual dose of morning insulin. Please check with your healthcare provider.

- If you take Metformin (Glucophage), you may be asked to hold this medication. Please check with your healthcare provider.

**Contrast Dye:**

Most types of CT scans require only intravenous (IV) contrast be given. Depending on the type of CT scan your physician orders, you may also be asked to pick up oral contrast in advance of the CT scan and drink several bottles of contrast at designated times up until the CT scan.

Injection of contrast causes you to feel warm, and your face may appear flushed. You may also have a metallic taste in your mouth. These sensations are normal and should last only a minute or so.

**Length of Time:**

The routine CT scan takes from 5-45 minutes, depending upon what type of CT scan your doctor ordered. After the CT scan, you may be asked to wait while a radiologist reviews the images to make sure they contain all of the necessary information. The radiologist will then send a report to your physician.

If you have any questions or are concerned about a reaction to the CT scan contrast, call your physician.

Physician's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_