

# CT Scan



Please arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled appointment time to register.

Please bring a list of all your current medications with you to your appointment.

Please tell the technologist before your scan if you think you might be pregnant.



IWK Health Centre



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

Aussi disponible en français :  
Tomodensitogramme (FF85-1104)

## **What is a CT scan?**

Computed Tomography (CT) scans are images made by a computer and X-ray machine. CT scans give more detailed pictures of bones and soft tissue organs than regular X-rays. These images will help your doctor recommend the best treatment for you. Most CT scans are simple, fast, and painless.

## **How do I get ready for a CT scan?**

There is often little or no preparation needed for a CT scan. Depending on the area of the body being examined, you may be asked not to eat or drink for a period of time before your scan. For some scans of the abdomen (stomach area), you may be given water or a special drink before your scan. Scheduling staff will tell you if you need to do anything to get ready for your appointment.

## **What will happen during the CT scan?**

- The technologist will ask you about any medications you are taking, and if you have any allergies or medical conditions. Please tell us if you:
  - › are taking any medication(s) for diabetes
  - › have kidney disease
  - › have ever had a reaction to X-ray dye

- You may be asked to take off some of your clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- You may need to have special contrast (X-ray dye) injected with a needle, usually into a vein in your arm. Iodine in the contrast helps certain body parts or structures show up better. For CT arthrogram studies, the contrast is injected into the joint that will be scanned. If you need a contrast injection, you may be asked to sign a consent form before your scan.
- If you are having contrast, the technologist will also insert an IV (intravenous) in your arm. This may be done in the CT scanner room or before you go in.
- You will be asked to lie on a table. The table will then be moved into the centre of the scanner. The scanner looks like a wide doughnut (but not a tunnel). It has an X-ray tube and sensors that move around the part of your body to be scanned, but will not touch you.
- You may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds during the scan.
- You will be monitored by staff at all times.


## **Can I breastfeed after the scan?**

- The most recent research has shown that you can continue to breastfeed after having the X-ray dye.

## **Are there any side effects?**

- Side effects from having a CT scan are very rare. During your procedure you will be exposed to a small amount of radiation. The benefits of detecting disease are believed to outweigh the risks from receiving such a small radiation dose. We use the lowest amount of radiation needed to produce quality images.
- If you are having contrast, it is common to feel a warm flush and/or a metallic taste in your mouth. Sometimes patients have nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or an itchy rash. If these happen, they usually do not last very long. Other more severe allergic reactions are extremely rare.

## **How long will the CT scan take?**

- Appointment times depend on the type of CT scan you are having. Most scans only need you to be on the CT scanner table for 5-10 minutes, but you should expect to be in the CT Department for 15-60 minutes.
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- Please keep in mind that emergency cases will take priority and may cause delays for scheduled patients.
- A family-friendly atmosphere is important to us, but young children are not allowed in the CT scanner room. Please bring an adult to stay with them during your scan.

## **When will I get the results?**

- The technologist who does your CT scan will not discuss the results with you. The CT scanner creates many images. The images will be carefully analyzed by a radiologist (a doctor with special training in diagnostic medical imaging).
- The results of your scan will be sent to your family health care provider within a few days. Your family health care provider will discuss the results with you.

## **Feedback**

- We welcome your questions and comments about your care and this diagnostic procedure.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local hospital (see back cover) or Nova Scotia Health Authority's feedback line (toll-free) at:
  - › 1-844-884-4177

**Aberdeen Hospital**

Phone: 902-752-7600 ext. 2920

**Cape Breton Regional Hospital**

Phone: 902-567-7778

**Cobequid Community Health Centre**

Phone: 902-869-6125

**Colchester East Hants Health Centre**

Phone: 902-893-4321

**Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre**

Phone: 902-667-5400 ext. 6156

**Dartmouth General Hospital**

Phone: 902-465-8318

**Inverness Consolidated Memorial  
Hospital**

Phone: 902-258-1922

**QEII - Halifax Infirmary**

Phone: 902-473-4276

**QEII - Victoria Building**

Phone: 902-473-7770

**South Shore Regional Hospital**

Phone: 902-527-5227

**St. Martha's Regional Hospital**

Phone: 902-867-4500 ext. 4524

**Valley Regional Hospital**

Phone: 902-679-3819 ext. 2

**Yarmouth Regional Hospital**

Phone (toll-free): 1-877-742-2571

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