

# TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®

## CT Scan of the Chest with Contrast



### What is a CT Scan of the Chest with Contrast?

Your doctor has suggested you/your child have a CT scan with contrast as part of the evaluation at National Jewish. A CT or CAT scan is a shortened name for computerized tomography. A CT scan takes pictures of the inside of the body. The pictures are more detailed than a typical x-ray. During a CT scan of the chest pictures are taken of cross sections or slices of the thoracic structures in your body. The thoracic structures include your lungs, heart and the bones around these areas. When contrast is used during a CT scan of the chest thoracic structures are highlighted even more.

CT scans can help determine a diagnosis early. Your doctor will use this information to determine the best treatment for you.

### How do you get ready for the test?

You doctor will have bloodwork done prior to the CT scan with contrast to see how well your kidneys are functioning.

- **For children under 18 years - Do not eat 4 hours before the test is scheduled. You/your child may drink clear fluids only.** It is important that you drink enough clear liquids (like water) to be well hydrated prior to the test.
- **For adults –There is no food restriction for this scan.** It is important that you drink enough clear liquids (like water) to be well hydrated prior to the test.
- Wear clothing you can remove from the waist up. You will be given a gown to wear.
- Avoid having any barium studies done 2 to 3 days before the CT scan.
- Talk with your doctor before the test if you have a history of reactions to contrast in the past.

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- If you have not had recent blood test for creatinine, a finger stick blood test may be done just prior to your scan.
- Please arrive 20 minutes before the test is scheduled. The radiology technologist will ask you questions and have you complete a questionnaire.

### What is done during the test?

The radiology technologist will explain the CT scan with contrast to you before you start. Ask questions if you don't understand. Before the study you/your child will need to remove all clothing and jewelry from the waist up. You will be given a hospital gown to wear. The technologist will start an IV. The IV will be used to give you the contrast media. The contrast media will be injected into the IV. The CT scan does not hurt. You will feel a prick when the IV is started. Many people feel a warm "flush" as the contrast media is injected. This is normal and passes quickly.

The CT scanner includes a table you will lie on and a doughnut shaped ring. You will lie still on the table while it advances through the ring. You will lie still on the table. The technologist will give you instructions during the test. You will be asked to raise your arms above your head sometimes. You will also be asked to hold your breath for 10 to 12 seconds. While you hold your breath the table will move through the ring while pictures are taken. The pictures will be taken before, during and after the contrast media is injected into the IV. It is important to lie still while the images are taken.

Young children may have trouble lying still during the CT scan. If this is the case the child may be given medicine to make him or her sleepy first. This is done in the Pediatric Care Unit. If this is done first, a nurse will also be at the CT scan. If you are concerned your young child may not be able to hold still talk with your doctor before the CT scan.

### What should you do after the test?

Drink extra fluids for several hours after the test.

### How long will the test take?

A CT scan of the chest with contrast takes about 40 minutes. This includes 20 minutes for the test and 20 minutes for preparation.

### How do you get to your test?

Your appointment is in the Institute for Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology). You will be directed where to go when you check-in. If you have any questions you can contact Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology) at 303-398-1611. PTE-017, rev2/18