

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®

CT Enterography (Small Bowel) with Contrast



What is CT Enterography?

Your doctor has suggested you/your child have a CT scan with contrast as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. 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 CT Enterography, pictures are taken of cross sections or slices of the abdominal structures in your body focusing on the small bowel. You will drink a specific type of dilute barium prior to the scan and have an injection in a vein using an IV to highlight the small bowel 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?

- Do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours prior to this test.
- You will be given a gown and scrub pants to wear.
- Avoid having any barium studies done for one week before the CT scan.
- Talk with your doctor before the test if you have a history of reactions to contrast in the past.
- If you take Metformin or Metformin containing drugs for diabetes (Glucophage, Glucovance, Janumet, etc.), discuss this with your doctor prior to your CT appointment. There are specific requirements for you following your scan.
- If you have not had a recent blood test for creatinine, a finger-poke blood test will be done just prior to your scan.
- You will receive a phone call from the radiology department on the night before your test to tell you what time to arrive. If you do not receive a call, please contact radiology directly at 303-398-1611 between 7:00am and 6:00pm.
- You will need to arrive in radiology one hour prior to your exam time to get an IV placed in your arm and begin drinking dilute barium. A technologist will tell you when and how much to drink. Several bottles of barium and 1-2 cups of water are required.

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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 change into a hospital gown and pants. 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. 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?

The dilute barium you will drink for this test is not absorbed by the body and will be passed as a liquid in about 2-3 hours. Once this liquid stool has passed, bowel movements will return to normal. In addition, you should drink extra fluids for several hours after the test.

How long will the test take?

CT Enterography with contrast takes about 1 hour and 45 minutes. This includes 45 minutes for the test and 1 hour for drinking the barium.

How do you get to your test?

Your appointment is in the Institute for Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology). Radiology is in on the third floor of the Smith Building. On the day of your test, first report to the Admissions Desk just inside the Main Entrance. You will be directed where to go when you check-in. If you have any questions or will not be able to make your appointment, please call Advanced Biomedical Imaging (Radiology) at 303-398-1611.