

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



CT Scan of the Chest

What is a CT Scan of the Chest?

Your doctor has suggested you have a CT scan 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.

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?

- 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.

What is done during the test?

The CT scan does not hurt. The radiology technologist will explain the CT scan 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 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.

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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. It is important to lie still while the images are taken. You may be asked to take extra pictures lying on your stomach.

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.

How long will the test take?

A CT scan of the chest takes about 30 minutes. This includes 15 to 20 minutes for the test and 10 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.

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