



KAISER PERMANENTE®

Patient Information Sheet

CT Scan with Intravenous Contrast Media

What should I be sure to mention to the technologist prior to my exam?

Please read the below information for more details, but make sure you inform the technologist if:

- You may be pregnant
- You have kidney problems
- You have had an adverse reaction related to a prior CT
- You are currently taking any medications for diabetes (ex: Metformin or Glucophage)

Reminder: Please remove any jewelry prior to your exam

What is a CT Scan?

A CT scan is a medical test done by an x-ray technologist. A CT scan can help your doctors diagnose and treat medical conditions. CT imaging uses special x-ray equipment to produce multiple images that show your internal organs, bone, soft tissue, and blood vessels in better detail than regular x-rays.

What can I expect during a CT scan?

During the exam you will be placed on a table and then positioned inside the center of a large ring-like scanner. The machine makes a minimal amount of noise and the table moves forward and backward. The study is not painful. While the actual exam time takes less than 2 minutes in most cases, (this is approximately the time you would be moving through the scanner), the entire procedure from instruction to completion can take up to 2 hours or more, dependent upon the type of exam you are having. Some exams require you to move through the scanner more than once, some are shorter and some are longer.

What are Intravenous Contrast (IV) Media?

In order to see the blood vessels and body tissues on the scan, the technologist must inject contrast media into a vein. Some people refer to this as “dye” although it’s not like the dye you might use at home. These contrast media are liquid solutions that contain iodine and show up on x-ray. It is removed from the body through the kidneys, but will not change the color of your urine.

What does the IV contrast feel like?

As the contrast media circulates through your body, you may experience a cool feeling in your arm followed by a warm or flushed sensation throughout your body. This may be accompanied by a metallic or salty taste. In rare cases, some people may become nauseated. These sensations are normal responses to contrast media and they are temporary.

Are there any unusual adverse reactions?

Some people have unpredictable allergic-type reactions to contrast media. Minor reactions include hives, sneezing, and swelling of the eyes or lips. These are temporary and usually require no special treatment. Rarely, contrast media may cause serious or life-threatening reactions such as swelling around the throat and difficulty breathing. However, trained professionals, emergency equipment, and drugs are available

American College of Radiology - Patient Safety Website:
<http://www.acr.org/MainMenuCategories/PatientInfo.aspx>

for prompt, vigorous treatment. In order to make this exam as safe as possible, please tell the technologist if you have had a prior reaction to contrast media, have allergies to medicine, or have asthma or hay fever.

Contrast media which is injected into your system can also affect kidney function. People with normal kidney function are at extremely low risk of having any problems following use of contrast, but people who have abnormal kidney function may be at higher risk. **Please inform the technologist if you have a history of kidney problems or any current kidney problems.**

Is this procedure necessary?

During a CT scan, you're briefly exposed to more radiation than you would be during a routine X-ray. Radiation exposure potentially increases your risk of developing cancer; however, your physician is aware of the risks and feels that the value of an accurate diagnosis outweighs the low risk of the procedure.

The risk of radiation is much higher for pregnant women, so you should **make sure you inform the technologist if there is a chance you may be pregnant.**

How do I receive the results?

A physician, usually a radiologist, with special training in imaging will interpret your examination and write a report that will be sent to the physician who ordered your exam. It will be electronically available in your medical record, although these results are not automatically available online to you. Interpretation of your exam may involve comparison with prior exams, may require discussion between the radiologist and the ordering physician, and may take 2-3 days to complete, although the results are usually available sooner. Your physician will help to communicate the meaning of the results to you.