

How long will it take?

- If your doctor has asked for a scan without oral contrast, the scanning process usually takes less than 20 minutes.
- If you are given oral contrast to drink on arrival, you will likely have to wait an hour before entering the scanning room. The scanning process will then usually take 20 minutes or less. The total time in the department is normally around 60 minutes.
- The technologist strives to start each appointment on time, but emergency patients and other unforeseen events may cause a delay.

Are there any side effects?

- Not typically. If your scan requires the use of IV dye, you will be monitored for 15 minutes post-injection to assess for allergic reaction. You can drive home afterwards and may return to work as necessary.

Can you eat and drink afterwards?

- Yes. It's preferred that you drink water.

When will you get the results?

- The images will be examined after your visit and a written report on the findings, which is normally available in a week to 10 days, will be sent to your referring healthcare practitioner.

What if I am claustrophobic?

- Most patients tolerate our CT machine quite well. In some rare instances a mild sedative may be prescribed by your physician to help cope with anxiety. If you are planning to take medication for the exam, it is our policy that you have a driver to bring you home afterwards.

What should I do if I have questions or I can't make my appointment time?

If you have questions about the scan and how it is performed or if you cannot make your appointment time, please call the Diagnostic Imaging Department at:

HDMH Site: (705) 789-2311 ext. 2242/2326

SMMH Site: (705) 645-4404 ext. 3112

If you have questions about why you are having the scan done, please talk to your referring healthcare practitioner.



Legal notice

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. It is not definitive, and Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare cannot accept any legal liability arising from its use. We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change. Please always check specific advice on the procedure or raise any concerns about the scan with your doctor.

PATIENT INFORMATION CT SCAN

This leaflet provides general information about having a computed tomography (CT) scan.

It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

Diagnostic Imaging Department

Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Site

100 Frank Miller Dr.

Huntsville, ON P1H 1H7

(705) 789-2311 ext. 2242/2326

An Independent Health Facility (IHF) C.T. Clinic

South Muskoka Memorial Hospital Site

75 Ann Street

Bracebridge, ON P1L 2E4

(705) 645-4404 ext. 3112

What is a CT scan?

- A CT scan uses a special x-ray machine to produce an image of a cross-section or slice of the body. The table will slide you in and out through the gantry, or ‘doughnut’-shaped structure.
- A narrow fan-shaped beam of x-rays is produced from inside the gantry, and rotates in a complete circle around you. The x-rays pass through your body and are detected by electronic sensors on the other side of the gantry. The information passes to a computer, which then produces a picture of the internal structure of the body. The pictures are displayed on a computer monitor and examined by the radiologist.
- A scan takes between 3 and 45 seconds depending on what area of the body is being scanned.

Who will be doing the CT scan?

- A highly-trained medical radiation technologist (MRT) will perform the exam. A Radiologist, a doctor who specializes in reading x-rays and CT scans, will review the images and send a report to your healthcare provider.

Where will the procedure take place?

- In the CT Scan Suite. Please report to the Diagnostic Imaging Department first to register.

Can I bring a relative/friend?

- Yes, but for safety reasons they will likely not be able to accompany you into the scanner room except in very special circumstances. There is a designated waiting area in the CT department.

Are there any special preparations?

- For many scans, no preparation is required. For scans that include the stomach and intestines, you may be asked to fast for a period of time and/or

arrive early to drink water or an iodine water mixture. The iodine and water solution is a product used to highlight the digestive tract and make it easier for the radiologist to interpret the scan.

Are there any risks?

- CT scanning involves x-rays. Female patients who are or might be pregnant **must** inform a member of staff in advance. The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary x-ray of the chest or body and is equal to the natural radiation we receive from the atmosphere over a period of approximately three years.
- Many CT examinations involve you having a CT dye/contrast injected into a vein in order to increase the amount of information obtained from the scan. The injection typically causes a brief warm feeling, but can cause an allergic reaction in a small number of people. The MRT will have a safety checklist for you to fill out before your scan. If you need to be pre-medicated prior to the injection, the ordering healthcare practitioner will prescribe the necessary medications ahead of time.

Before your scan

- The MRT will explain the procedure for your examination. If you are required to remove clothing you will be shown to a private cubicle. You will be asked to put on the surgical gown. If you wear clothing without any metal buttons or zippers, you may not need to change into a gown. If you are having a scan that requires contrast you will be given the safety checklist, and an IV catheter will be inserted for the duration of your exam.

What happens during the CT scan?

- You will be taken into the scanner room and made as comfortable as possible on the table. Straps and pillows may be used to help maintain the correct position or to help you hold still during the exam. You may be given an injection of a contrast medium into a vein in your arm. The table will be moved slowly to position the part of your body under investigation within the gantry, or ‘doughnut’.
- The MRT will return to the control room but you will be able to talk to them via an intercom and they will be able to see you throughout the duration of the scan. When you enter the CT scanner, special lights may be used to ensure that you are properly positioned. With modern CT scanners, you will only hear slight buzzing, clicking and whirring sounds as the CT scanner revolves during the course of the scan.
- During the scan, you may be asked to hold your breath or not swallow while each image is being produced. This is essential to produce high quality scans without motion artefact, which can obscure detail. However, if you feel any discomfort or apprehension, please mention it immediately to the MRT.

Do I need to withhold my Metformin?

- No. It is no longer recommended for diabetic patients to withhold Metformin when kidney function is adequate enough for CT dye injection.