



CT Scan

(Computerized Tomography)

What is a CT Scan?

Note: Child-friendly language in green.

- A CT uses advanced x-ray technology to produce detailed pictures of the inside of your child's body.
- A CT scanner (**camera**) has a small tunnel with a bed that moves in and out. Some kids say it looks like a spaceship or doughnut.

Additional Information

- Some kids need contrast (**picture medicine**) to help make their pictures more clear. If your child needs contrast for his/her scan, a nurse will gently place an IV (**tiny, soft straw placed into a vein using a small needle**) into his/her arm or hand.
- Sedation is an option for those unable to hold still for the pictures. If your child is scheduled with sedation, a nurse will call you 1 or 2 days in advance in order to provide instructions as to how to prepare your child.

Why is it done?

- A CT scan provides very clear pictures of tissues, organs and bones.
- CT scans provide much more detail than a regular x-ray.
- A CT scan is often used to diagnose certain conditions and plan for treatments.

What can I do to help my child?

- Child life specialists are available to help your child better understand and cope with the scan.
- Parents/caregivers are also encouraged to be with their child during the scan, though there are some exceptions. Women who may be pregnant cannot be in the CT scanner room during the procedure.
- Please ask a staff member for more information about these options for support!



CT scanner room



Children's National.

Child Life

Children's National Hospital Department of Radiology is staffed with Certified Child Life Specialists. Child life specialists are trained to address the emotional and developmental needs of children and their families during healthcare experiences and can provide procedural preparation and support before and during your child's exam.

Contact Information

If you would like to speak to a child life specialist before your child's radiology appointment, please call **202-476-3338** or email **childliferadiology@childrensnational.org**.

Created by Children's National Child Life Services

Children's National Hospital
Division of Diagnostic Imaging and Radiology
111 Michigan Ave NW Washington DC, 20010
Appointments: 202-476-4700

