Preparation For a Computerized Tomography Scan (CT Scan)

Your caregiver has ordered a CT scan. A CT (Computerized Tomography) scan is a computerized x-ray that allows your physician to look at “x-ray slices” through your body. It is capable of giving more detailed information than a regular x-ray. It is also capable of looking at soft tissues better than a regular x-ray.

Follow your caregiver's instructions regarding eating and drinking before your scan. It may be necessary to drink a special dye the night prior to your test. This dye improves the quality of the x-ray and gives your physician more information from the test. Follow instructions carefully so your test will not have to be rescheduled. Arrive at the hospital one hour early to check in or as directed by your caregiver.

LET YOUR PHYSICIAN OR X-RAY TECHNOLOGIST KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies, especially to dyes, contrast media, or iodine
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications, and creams
- Food or liquids consumed before the test
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams)
- Previous problems with anesthetics or novocaine
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*)
- History of bleeding or blood problems
- Previous surgery
- Previous or existing kidney problems
- Other health problems

DURING YOUR SCAN:

You may be given dye (contrast media) through an intravenous (IV) line. This may make you feel warm or give you a strange taste in your mouth. This is momentary. Other than the dye, a CT SCAN is the same as any other x-ray and will cause you no discomfort. You will lie on a table that slides into a round hole. The technologist may ask you to hold your breath for a few seconds during your scan. You may leave when the x-ray technologist says you are done.

FOR YOUR COMFORT DURING THE TEST:

- Relax as much as possible during the test.
- Try to follow the technologists' instructions to speed up the test.
- Usually the test will take 30 minutes to one hour to complete.

FOLLOWING YOUR TEST:

- You may resume normal diet and activities.
- Following your test the x-rays will be read by a *radiologist* (a specialist in looking at and diagnosing x-rays). The radiologist will give a report to your personal caregiver.
- Call for your x-ray results as instructed by your doctor or technologist.
- See your caregiver in three days or as instructed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- You should develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You have any allergic problems.

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