## Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: https://811.novascotia.ca

*Prepared by:* CT Service Advisory Provincial Committee
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To be reviewed April 2029 or sooner, if needed.
Learn more: https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Patient & Family Guide
2026

# CT Scan

## Please:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before your appointment time
- Bring a list of all your current medications
- Tell the technologist before your appointment if you think you might be pregnant

IWK Health

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www.nshealth.ca

## Feedback

- Please share your feedback with Patient Relations:
  - Toll-free: 1-844-884-4177
  - www.nshealth.ca/contact/feedback

Scan the QR code below on your device (open the camera on your device, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears)

- Other, more serious, allergic reactions are extremely rare.

## How long will the CT scan take?

- This will depend on the type of CT scan you are having. Most scans take 5 to 10 minutes. Your whole appointment may take 15 to 60 minutes.

> **Important**: Your appointment may be delayed if another person needs an emergency CT scan.

## When will I get the results?

- **The technologist who does your CT scan cannot share the results with you**.
- A radiologist (a doctor with special training in diagnostic medical imaging) will check your results. They will send them to your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) within a few days.
- Your primary health care provider will talk with you about your results.



# CT Scan

## What is a CT scan?

- Computed Tomography (CT) scans are images made by a computer and an X-ray machine. CT scans give more detailed pictures of bones and soft-tissue organs than regular X-rays.
- CT scans are quick and do not hurt.

## How do I get ready for a CT scan?

- Booking staff will tell you if you need to do anything to get ready for your appointment.
- Bring a list of all your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter products, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements) with you to the hospital.
- Depending on what part of your body is being scanned, you may be asked not to eat or drink for a period of time before your appointment.
- For some abdominal (stomach area) scans, you may be asked to drink water or a special drink before your scan.
- **Young children are not allowed in the CT scanner room**. This is for safety. Please have a responsible adult stay with them during your scan.

## What will happen during the CT scan?

- The technologist will ask you about any medications you are taking, and if you have any allergies or medical conditions. Please tell them if you:
  - Are taking any medications for diabetes
  - Have kidney disease
  - Have ever had a reaction to X-ray dye (called **contrast**)
- You may be asked to take off some of your clothes and change into a hospital gown.
- You may need to have X-ray dye injected with a needle, usually into a vein in your arm or into a joint. This dye helps certain body parts or structures show up better.
  - If you need X-ray dye, you may be asked to sign a consent form before your scan.
- If you are having X-ray dye, the technologist will also put an I.V. (intravenous) in your arm. This may be done in the CT scanner room or before you go into the room.
- You will be asked to lie on a table. Then, the table will be moved into the middle of the scanner.



- The scanner is shaped like a large circle with a hole in the middle (like a donut). It is not shaped like a tunnel. It has an X-ray tube and sensors that move around the part of your body that is being scanned. The scanner will not touch you.
- You may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds during the scan.
- You will be monitored by staff at all times.

## Is it safe to breastfeed or chestfeed after the scan?

- Yes. You can safely breastfeed or chestfeed after having X-ray dye.

## Are there any side effects?

Side effects from having a CT scan are very rare. During your procedure, you will be exposed to a small amount of radiation. We use the lowest amount of radiation needed to produce quality images.

- If you are having X-ray dye, it is common to feel a warm flush and/or a metal taste in your mouth. You may also have nausea (upset stomach) or an itchy rash. If these happen, they usually do not last very long.