



## Computerized Tomography Scan (CT Scan)

### *Our Mission*

Nicklaus Children's Hospital's mission is to inspire hope and promote lifelong health by providing the best care to every child. The hospital focuses on family-centered care in order to provide an optimal experience for patients and their families. We believe that parents and guardians play a vital role in the success of this test and want you to have an active role in your child's healthcare. The following information is to help prepare both you and your child for the scheduled exam.

### **What is a CT Scan?**

- A Computerized Tomography (CT) scan takes detailed pictures of the inside of the organs, tissues, blood vessels, and other areas not seen on regular X-rays.
- It is often used to diagnose certain conditions and plan for treatments.
- Nicklaus Children's hospital's CT scanner uses a low dose of radiation.
- *Women who are pregnant and any accompanying children are not permitted to be in the room during the scan* If you are pregnant, please bring another adult who can stay with your child during the scan and/or another adult who can wait in the waiting room with the other children. *CT scans are not painful.* The bed moves slowly through the tunnel and the camera remains around your child, never touching. A lot of children think the camera looks like a spaceship or doughnut!
- A CT scan takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes depending on the type of scan.
- In order to get the best results, it is very important that your child *holds still* for the scan.
- *In certain cases*, patients may be given a mild oral sedative to relieve anxiety and help with holding still. Patients who need stronger sedation (children younger than six to eight years old and some older children with developmental delays) will be re-scheduled for a future scan under general anesthesia.

### **Preparing Caregivers: What to expect during the procedure.**

#### **Step 1: Getting Ready**

- From the Radiology Department waiting room, you will be brought to an exam room where your child will begin to get ready for the scan and be seen by a nurse who will take your child's vital signs, and medical history.
- *Please bring your child's favorite toy or activity to provide distraction while in the room.*
- Some CT scans may be ordered with "contrast" which is a special liquid-like substance that helps make the pictures from the scan more clear and detailed.
- Medical staff will explain the type of contrast and how it will be administered the day of the appointment.
- Contrast can be given orally, or through an IV (small, plastic straw in the vein of the hand or arm).
  - **Oral contrast** may be mixed with flavored juice.
  - Drinking the contrast takes about 1-2 hours so it can pass through the stomach evenly.
  - **IV contrast** is done by placing a small, plastic straw in the vein (usually the hand or arm).
  - *Numbing medication may be applied to make the IV placement as comfortable as possible.*



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### **Step 2: Taking Pictures**

- From the exam room, a member of the team will help take you and your child to the CT room.
- A maximum of two caregivers may go to the CT room with the patient all other children must be supervised in the waiting room by another adult.
- If you are staying in the CT room during the scan a technologist will provide you with a lead vest to wear while in the room shielding you from radiation.
- Once in the room, you will see a long table attached to a circular camera. Some children say the CT scanner looks like a big donut or spaceship!
- Depending on the part of the body being scanned, your child may lay head or feet first on the table.
- To help your child stay secure and still during the scan, the technologist will place a Velcro strap across your child's waist.
- The table will then move slowly through the tunnel part of the scanner until the part of the body that is being scanned is under the camera.
- During the scan, staff will be in the control room connected to the CT room and can see you and your child at all times through the glass window.
- A staff member will be able to speak to you and hear you through an intercom system in the room.

### **Step 3 Results**

Please contact your doctor 48 to 72 business hours after the scan.

### ***Child Life Specialists***

A part of the Child Life Specialist's role in the Radiology Department is to help children and families cope with the anxiety and fear associated with medical procedures. A Child Life Specialist may be available on the day of the exam to provide education and coping strategies. For more information, please contact Nicklaus Children's Hospital's Children's Experiences Department at 305-666-6511 extension 4875 and select #1.