

Brain CT Angiography

Appointment Information

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Address: _____

Notes: _____

About

Brain CT angiography (CTA) is performed to help diagnose conditions to identify a small aneurysm or arteriovenous malformation (abnormal communications between blood vessels) inside the brain.

During your brain CT Angiography, the technologist will begin by positioning you on the CT examination table, usually lying flat on your back or less commonly, on your side or on your stomach. Straps and pillows may be used to help you maintain the correct position and to help you remain still during the exam.

If contrast is used an automatic injection pump connected to the IV will give contrast material at a controlled rate. In some cases, especially in children and patients with fragile and small veins, the contrast is hand-injected using a syringe. A small amount of contrast material may initially be injected through the IV to determine how long it will take for the contrast to reach the body part that is being evaluated.

During scanning, the table is positioned at the start point of imaging and will then move relatively rapidly through the opening of the machine as the actual CT scanning is performed.

You may be asked to hold your breath during the scanning. Any motion, whether breathing or body movements, can lead to artifacts on the images. This loss of image quality can resemble the blurring seen on a photograph taken of a moving object.

When the examination is completed, you will be asked to wait until the technologist verifies that the images are of high enough quality for accurate interpretation.

The entire CT angiography exam may be completed within a few seconds. Your actual time in the scanner room will be longer as the technologist will have to position you on the table, check or place an IV line, do preliminary imaging to verify the beginning and end points of the exam, and set up the scanner and contrast injection settings based on the part of the body being imaged.

Preparations

You should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing to your brain CT angiography exam. You may be given a gown to wear during the procedure.

You may be asked not to eat or drink anything for a few hours beforehand, especially if a contrast material will be used in your exam.

You should inform your technologist of all medications you are taking and if you have any allergies. If you have a known allergy to contrast material, or "dye," your radiologist may prescribe medications (usually a steroid) to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction. These medications generally need to be taken 12 hours prior to administration of contrast material.

Women should always inform their radiologist or the CT technologist if there is any possibility that they may be pregnant. Also inform your doctor of any recent illnesses or other medical conditions.