

Chest CT Scan

Appointment Information

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Address: _____

Notes: _____

About

Chest CT scans are performed to detect various lung disorders, including lung cancer, pneumonia, tuberculosis, emphysema, COPD, or inflammation. Low dose CT is also used for the detection and surveillance of lung nodules.

In July 2013 the U.S Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended annual low dose CT scans to screen for lung cancer in high risk smokers (aged 55 to 80 who smoked the equivalent of a pack a day for 30 years including those who quit less than 15 years ago). When detected early lung cancer is more treatable and survival rates improve significantly. This screening could apply to about nine million Americans and may prevent as many as 20,000 deaths a year from lung cancer.

Chest CT scans also help radiologists to:

- further examine abnormalities found on conventional chest x-rays.
- help diagnose the cause of clinical signs or symptoms of disease of the chest, such as cough, shortness of breath, chest pain, or fever.
- detect and evaluate the extent of tumors that arise in the chest, or tumors that have spread there from other parts of the body.
- assess whether tumors are responding to treatment.
- help plan radiation therapy.
- evaluate injury to the chest, including the blood vessels, lungs, ribs and spine.
- further evaluate abnormalities of the chest found on fetal ultrasound examinations.

During the chest CT scan, the technologist begins by positioning you on the CT examination table, usually lying flat on your back or less commonly, on your side or on your stomach.

If contrast material is used, it may be swallowed, or injected through an intravenous line (IV), depending on the type of examination.

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 CT examination is usually completed within 30 minutes.

Preparations

You may be asked to wear a gown during the chest CT scan. Metal objects, including jewelry, eyeglasses, dentures and hairpins, may affect the CT images and should be left at home or removed prior to your exam. You may also be asked to remove hearing aids and removable dental work.

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 doctor 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.

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.

Also inform your doctor of any recent illnesses or other medical conditions and whether you have a history of heart disease, asthma, diabetes, and kidney disease or thyroid problems. Any of these conditions may increase the risk of an unusual adverse effect.

Women should always inform their radiologist and the CT technologist if there is any possibility that they may be pregnant.