

# What is a CT Scan?

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A CT scan is short for **Computed Tomography scan**. It is a type of **X-ray** that provides special views of **organs** in your body. The **camera** looks like a doughnut, with a hole in the center. The machine inside the doughnut moves in a circle producing images in great detail. As you lay on the bed, you will go in and out of the doughnut but nothing will touch your body.

## Why it's important to have a CT scan?

A CT scan will help the doctor to see parts of your body that they can not see with a simple X-ray.

## Your job during a CT scan.

It is important to keep your body as still as a statue during the CT scan, so the **pictures** will be quick and clear. The pictures take just a few minutes.

## What happens when you have a CT scan?

### Steps:

- Lay on the **bed** in front of the camera that looks like a doughnut.
- Place your hands above your head so they are out of the camera's view.
- A **seat belt** may be placed over your lap for safety.
- The bed will move up and then in and out of the doughnut. A caregiver can put on a **special apron** and stand next to the bed holding your hand during the pictures.
- After the bed moves in and out of the doughnut, you may hear a sound like a washing machine but nothing will touch you on the bed.
- It is important to stay as still as a statue during your pictures without any wiggles.
- You may hear a voice giving you directions from a speaker in the doughnut. These directions are important for your pictures. We will talk you through the steps first and practice with you before hand.
- Once the pictures are finished, the bed will be moved closer to the floor for you to get down.

## Things that can help when you have a CT scan.

### Helpful Hints During a CT Scan:

- Observe sending a favorite item (stuffed animal/blanket) or a caregiver through the camera first to see the process.
- A toy (light up, bubbles) or show can be used to help with distraction during the pictures.
- Practice taking deep breaths in and holding your breath. (Ex. Underwater swimming or blowing out candles.)
- Practice taking breaths out and holding your breathe.
- Children take cues from their caregivers, so it is helpful to remain calm.



## Things that can help when you have a CT scan continued:

### Helpful Hints when the CT is ordered with Contrast:

- Some people need Contrast (fluid that feels warm) through an IV to help make the pictures more clear.
- Ask about available numbing and pain control options. This may include application of Emla cream (1-hour prior) or by requesting LMX cream (30 minutes prior), the use of Buzzy Bee or Sweet-Ease (if less than 18 months.)
- IV Education with a Child Life Specialist.
- Comfort positioning and Distraction options during the IV placement.
- Breathing Reminders and/or Counting during poke; “Breathe in on 1,2 and out on 3.”

## Body Systems and Procedure Images



[UVMHealth.org/childrens](http://UVMHealth.org/childrens)

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University of Vermont  
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# Steps for a CT



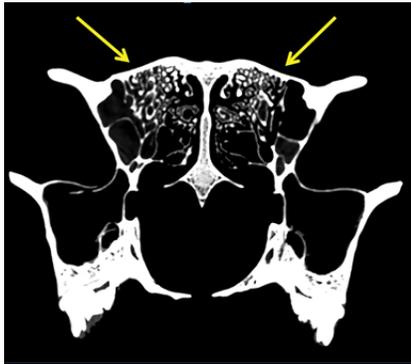
Lay on the bed in front of the camera that looks like a doughnut.



Seat belt over waist.



The bed goes up, down, forward and backward.



Pictures in the noisy camera.



A caregiver can hold a book, toy or show for you to look at/listen to.



Pictures are all done!

