

## WHAT IS A CT SCAN?

### CT SCAN BASICS

A CT scan, or cat scan, is a way to take a picture of the inside of your body using a large, round camera that your body will fit inside of. The picture will help your doctor learn more about your body's health.

#### STEP ONE

You will lay down on the CT scanner's bed. Your nurse will place a seat belt over your belly and will make sure you are comfortable. If you're cold, you can ask for a blanket.



#### STEP TWO

While you are laying down, the bed will move into the opening in the CT scanner's camera. Nothing will touch you. It is important that you keep your body very still.



#### STEP THREE

While you are inside the CT scanner's camera, you will hear swishing noises, like a washing machine or dishwasher. This is the sound of the camera taking pictures.



#### STEP FOUR

You might be asked to hold your breath for a short time while the CT scanner is taking pictures. This helps your body stay extra still so that the pictures come out clearly.



#### STEP FIVE

Some pictures need to be taken with contrast. Contrast is fluid that is put in your body through an IV. (Learn more about IVs [here](#).) The fluid glows under the camera and helps your doctor see different parts of your body.



#### STEP SIX

If your picture needs contrast, the bed will move you out of the camera and your nurse will put the contrast through your IV. Your body might start to feel warm, even like you peed yourself, but don't worry, you won't actually pee!



#### STEP SEVEN

The bed will move back into the CT scanner. Once the last picture is taken, the bed will move out again and you can sit up and get off the bed. The picture will be sent to your doctor.



### COPING

While having a CT scan can be stressful, there are many ways to make the process easier.

#### Relax your body.

While it may seem difficult, keeping your body relaxed will help you feel calmer and less nervous. When you start to feel worried, try to:

- Take deep breaths, counting to 5 as you inhale and then counting to 5 as you exhale
- Listen to music
- Imagine how your body feels when you are relaxed
  - Where are you?
  - What are you doing?
  - Who are you with?

#### Talk to your caregiver(s), doctors, and nurses.

Tell them what would make you the most comfortable and ask questions if you don't understand something.