Questions to ask

You have a right to ask questions about the use of a CT scan before you decide whether to take part in a research study. You may want to ask the following questions:

- Is this CT scan being done specifically for the research study or is it also part of my regular medical care?
- Where will I go for my CT scan?
- How many scans will be needed?
- Will I need to do anything special to prepare?
- Will I receive medical dye (“contrast”)?
- What happens if the scan reveals a medical issue?
- Will I receive the results of my scan?
- Where will my images be kept?
- How will my privacy be protected?
- What happens if I decide to leave the study early?

Computed tomography (CT) is a procedure that uses x-ray equipment to create cross-sectional pictures of what is happening on the inside of your body. A CT scanner creates clear and detailed pictures that show your bones, organs, tissues, and blood vessels.

Questions? Call us at

This brochure contains general information for educational purposes and is not intended to provide medical advice. Talk with your own doctor or research team for advice about your personal situation and health concerns.
What is computed tomography (CT)?
A computed tomography (CT) is a procedure that uses x-ray equipment to create cross-sectional pictures of what is happening inside of your body. During the scan you will lie on a narrow platform bed as it slides through the scanner, which is shaped like a large donut. A CT scanner creates clear and detailed pictures that show your bones, organs, tissues, and blood vessels.

How should I prepare for a CT scan?
Talk with the research staff so that you understand how to prepare for the CT scan. Make sure you understand what to expect before, during, and after the scan. When a CT scan is part of a research study, additional steps may be needed. The research staff will go over this information with you.

What is different about a CT scan used for research?
If you have a CT scan as part of your regular medical care, your doctor is usually trying to check your health or diagnose a problem. When a CT scan is part of a research study, the scan is used to help answer a scientific question. It is not intended to provide you medical care or detect health problems.

Unlike standard CT scan results, which you and your doctor would discuss, study results might not be discussed with you. Your scans might be reviewed as part of a larger group of scans and not looked at individually.

What are the risks of undergoing a CT scan?
CT scans are usually considered safe and relatively painless. There are small risks associated with radiation exposure. If contrast is needed, there is a slight risk of an allergic reaction.

Any research study may involve risks; the informed consent form for your research study will explain any specific risks. Make sure you understand both the risks of a CT scan and the overall study before you decide to take part.