

CT Abdomen and Pelvis

Why is it done?

Computed tomography (CT) of the abdomen and pelvis is a diagnostic imaging test used to help detect diseases of the internal organs, small bowel and colon. It is often used to determine the cause of unexplained pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. A CT scan help stage cancers, locate abnormalities not visual on a traditional X-ray, or evaluate abnormalities suggested by other imaging modalities.

How to prepare:

Please tell the technologist if you have an insulin pump.

You may be asked to:

- Remove metal objects, such as a belt or jewelry which might interfere with image results
- Refrain from eating or drinking for a 4 hours before your scan

Contrast material

A special dye called contrast material is needed for some CT scans to help highlight the areas of your body being examined. The contrast material appears white on images, which can help emphasize blood vessels, intestines or other structures. Depending on the reason for your CT scan will determine which type or types of contrast that will be necessary.

Contrast material might be given to you:

- **By mouth.** If your esophagus or stomach are being scanned, you may need to swallow a liquid that contains contrast material. This drink may taste unpleasant.
- **By injection.** Contrast agents can be injected through a vein in your arm to help your gallbladder, urinary tract, liver or blood vessels stand out on the images. You may experience a feeling of warmth during the injection or a metallic taste in your mouth.
- **By enema.** A contrast material may be inserted in your rectum to help visualize your intestines. This procedure can make you feel bloated and uncomfortable.

What to expect during the test:

CT scanners are shaped like a large doughnut standing on its side. You lie on a narrow, motorized table that slides through the opening into a tunnel. Straps and pillows may be used to help you stay in position. While the table moves you into the scanner, detectors and the X-ray tube rotate around you. Each rotation acquires several images of thin slices of your body. You may hear buzzing and whirring noises.

A technologist in a separate room can see and hear you. You will be able to communicate with the technologist via intercom. The technologist may ask you to hold your breath at certain points to avoid blurring the images.

What to expect after the test:

- You can resume your usual activities and normal diet immediately.
- The results of your exam should be available to your physician within 24-48 hours.
- Your physician will discuss the test results with you.