Information on Computed Tomography

Introduction

Computed Tomography (CT) makes use of computer technology together with a rotating x-ray device to create detail cross-sectional images of the organs or areas of the body to provide diagnostic information for suspected pathology.

The Operation / Procedure

1. The whole procedure is monitored by radiology staff.
2. During the examination, the patient will be lying on the table of the CT scanner. The table will then carry the patient slowly through the gantry of the scanner and a well-collimated X-ray beam will pass through the patient. A number of cross-sectional images of the organs / areas are made.
3. Intravenous or oral contrast medium may be needed to improve the diagnostic quality of the images.
4. Medication for sedation are sometime administered to paediatric patients in order to obtain images without undue movement.
5. The examination will usually be completed within an hour, but occasionally some will be longer.

Before the Operation / Procedure

1. A written consent is required for all CT exams with injection of contrast medium.
2. Patients younger than 18 should be accompanied by parents /relative. Consent form should be signed by parents / legal guardian.
3. Female patients of aged between 10 to 60 years (excluding patients with previous hysterectomy or tubal ligation) are also need to have the consent form signed before examination.
4. Inform medical staff before the examination if patient is or may be pregnant as the examination involves high dose of X-ray that is harmful to a foetus. Pregnancy test may be necessary in case of any doubt if the examination is to be proceed.
5. Inform doctor of history of allergy to food and drugs, and in particular any previous reaction to contrast medium, asthma, urticarial, eczema and allergy rhinitis etc. Oral or intravenous steroid premedication may be needed before injection of contrast medium.
6. For examinations with intravenous contrast medium, fasting is needed for 4 hours prior to the examination.
7. For diabetic patient on drug - consult clinician concerned for the adjustment of insulin dosage if necessary.
8. All metallic objects (e.g. watches, jewellery, ear rings, hair pins… etc.) should be removed before examination and kept safe by yourself.
9. During CT scanning, keep still and listen carefully to the instructions given by the radiology staff.

After the Operation / Procedure

Eat or drink as usual after the examination.

Disclaimer

This leaflet only provides general information pertaining to this operation / procedure. While common risks and complications are described, the list is not exhaustive, and the degree of risk could also vary between patients. Please contact your doctor for detailed information and specific enquiry.

Reference

Smart Patient Website by Hospital Authority: Computed Tomography (2004)