

CT: Sinus-Screening Scan

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains a sinus-screening CT scan. It describes how it works, how to prepare for it, how it is done, what to expect during the scan, and how to get your results.



Scan this QR code with your phone camera for a digital copy of this handout.

What is a sinus-screening CT scan?

CT stands for *computed tomography*. A sinus-screening CT scan uses a special X-ray machine to take detailed pictures of the sinuses. CT scans show many types of tissue. This includes bones, soft tissues, muscle, and blood vessels.

How does the scan work?

In a sinus-screening CT scan, many X-ray beams are passed through the sinuses. Special sensors measure the amount of radiation absorbed by different tissues.

For the scan, you will lie on a table inside the CT machine. The X-ray tube will revolve around you and take pictures from many angles, forming cross-section images (*slices*) of the area. Your doctor will view the images on a computer.



For your scan, you will lie on a table inside the CT machine.

Contrast

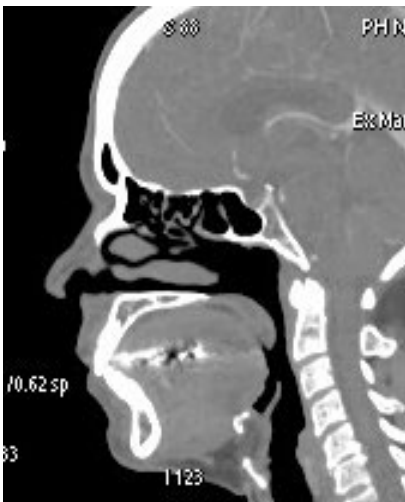
We may inject *contrast* (X-ray dye) into your vein right before the scan. Contrast makes tissues and blood vessels easier to see in the images.

How do I prepare?

- Keep taking your prescribed medicines as usual.
- *Women:* Tell your provider if you are pregnant.

On the Day of Your Scan

- It is OK to eat a light meal before your scan.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing.



A CT image of the sinuses

Before the Scan Begins

- We may ask you to remove hairpins, jewelry, glasses, hearing aids, and any removable dental work. These items could cause problems with the images.
- *Women:* If there is any chance you may be pregnant, tell the CT technologist **before** the scan begins.

If You Will Receive Contrast

- We will place a small *intravenous* (IV) tube into your arm vein. This will be done before you enter the scanning room.
- Before your scan, the CT technologist will ask you if you:
 - Are allergic to any medicines or iodine. Many types of contrast contain iodine. If you have ever had an allergic reaction to contrast, we will ask you to take medicine to prevent a reaction to the contrast before your scan.
 - Have asthma, diabetes, a heart problem, multiple myeloma, or kidney disease. These conditions may increase your risk of having a reaction to the contrast. For example, kidney disease makes it harder for your body to remove contrast from your bloodstream.

Can a family member or friend stay with me during the scan?

- CT scans use X-rays. Because of this, you may not have a family member or friend in the CT room during the exam.
- For young patients, a parent may be able to stay in the room with their child to help ease fear and give comfort. The parent must wear a lead apron to limit exposure to the radiation used in the scan.

How is the scan done?

- The CT technologist will help you get into position on the CT table. We will place pillows to help you stay in position for the scan.
- The technologist will then leave the room. You will be alone in the room during the scan, but the technologist can see, hear, and speak with you through an intercom at all times.
- You must lie still while the table moves into the center of the scanner. You must also hold still when the scans are being done. Holding still during the scan results in the best images.
- For the first few scans, the table will move quickly through the scanner. These first scans check the correct starting position. For the rest of the scans, the table will move more slowly.

- If you are having contrast, it will be given to you through your IV at this time.
- A sinus-screening CT scan usually takes 5 to 30 minutes, including set-up time. The actual scan time is less than 30 seconds.
- When the scan is over, we may ask you to wait while we check the images for quality. A few more scans may be done, if needed.

What will I feel during the scan?

CT scanning does not cause any pain. You may feel some discomfort from needing to hold still during the scans.

If contrast is used, you may:

- Feel discomfort at the injection site
- Feel warm or flushed when the contrast is injected
- Have a metallic taste in your mouth

These reactions are normal. They ease within 1 to 2 minutes.

Allergic Reactions to Contrast

Once in a while, a patient gets itching and hives for up to a few hours after the injection of contrast. Tell us if this happens to you and we will give you medicine to treat the symptoms.

Tell us if you become lightheaded or short of breath. You may be having a more severe allergic reaction to the contrast. A doctor or nurse will be nearby during the scan, if needed.

What should I do after the scan?

If you had contrast for the scan, drink a lot of fluids to help your kidneys flush the contrast from your body.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist skilled in reading CT scans will review and interpret the CT images. The radiologist will not talk with you about the results. The radiologist will send a detailed report to the provider who referred you for the scan. Your own provider will talk with you about the results of your scan.

You may also read your results on your MyChart page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call 206.598.6206.

You and your provider will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC - Montlake Imaging Services: 206.598.6200

UW Roosevelt Radiology: 206.598.6868

Harborview Imaging Services: 206.744.3105

UWMC - Northwest Imaging Services CT: 206.668.2061