

CT Routine Head



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What is a Routine Head CT?

CT scanning often referred to as a CAT scan, is a noninvasive test that is used to diagnose medical conditions. CT scanning provides more detailed information on head injuries, stroke, brain tumors and other brain diseases than regular x-rays.

CPT Codes

70450	Without Contrast	
70460	With Contrast	(rarely ordered)
70470	Without and With Contrast	(most common)

Indications

With Contrast:	TIA or stroke symptoms, tumor, abnormal non-contrast CT
Without Contrast:	TIA or stroke symptoms, trauma, seizure, OBS (dementia)
Without and With Contrast:	headache, TIA or stroke symptoms, tumor

Contraindications

For contrast exams, patients on glucophage/metformin must not take medications the day of the test. Additionally, the patient must stay off these medications for 48 hours after the CT. The patient must return to his referring physician in 48 hours and have a creatinine drawn. Based on those results, the patient may resume medication per their physician instructions.

Pregnancy.

Allergy to contrast material.

How Does Your Patient Prepare?

Without contrast studies: No preparation required.

With contrast studies: A current creatinine (30 days) is required if the patient is 60 years of age or older. Additionally, the patient must be NPO for 6 hours prior to the exam.

Your patient should also inform his doctor of any recent illnesses or other medical conditions, and if he has a history of heart disease, asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or thyroid problems. Any of these conditions may increase the risk of an unusual adverse effect.

What Happens During the Test?

Your patient will be asked to remove any jewelry and the technologist will obtain a medical history. The patient will lie on his back during the exam. If contrast is indicated, the technologist will start an IV. The patient may feel warm and flushed for a few seconds. The patient will be asked to remain very still during the scanning process.

The scan should take approximately 30 minutes.

After the Test

Your patient may resume normal activities following the CT.

If a contrast material was used and the patient is on glucophage/metphormin, the patient must stay off the medication for 48 hours. Additionally, he must return to his referring physician in 48 hours to have a creatinine drawn. Based on these results, the patient may resume medication in accordance with his physician's instructions.

The Results

A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within 1 business day.

(Information adapted from www.radiologyinfo.org and Dr. Charles De Pena)

This manual is intended for use as merely a guideline for referring physicians and their staff only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Iowa Radiology does not recommend any particular examination. Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders: CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.