

# YOUR CHILD'S CARDIAC CT SCAN

A CT scan (Computed Tomography scan) is a special procedure that uses multiple X-ray images to take a detailed picture (almost like a movie) of a specific part of your child's body.

The CT scan is a fast, painless test that can help the doctor take better care of your child's medical needs.

## WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

### Getting ready for the CT scan

- After you arrive and check in, your child may get a hospital gown to wear during the scan.
- Your child may be asked to remove anything metal (such as watches, metal hair clips, rubber bands, earrings or jewelry.) Metal may affect the pictures.
- A technologist may check your child's height and weight.

### IV placement

Your child will have an IV before the CT scan.

- Many children have fears of needles or shots. The medical team may have different options to help numb your child's skin that makes the IV placement easier. You can ask about numbing options for your child.
- The IV is used to give medicine called "contrast" that helps take better pictures of your child's heart and blood vessels.

### In the CT scanner room

You and your child will be taken to the CT scanner room. The CT scanner is a large machine with a circle or donut shaped camera. A moveable exam table (or bed) moves in and out of this circle camera.

During the scan, your child will lie on the table. To make sure your child is safe on the table, the technologist may place blankets or Velcro straps on your child.

During the CT Scan: Once your child is in the right position, the technologist will go to the room next door to begin the scan. The technologist will always be able to see, hear and speak to your child during the scan.

If you are staying in the CT room with your child during the scan:

- You will be asked to wear a lead apron. This will reduce the risk of radiation exposure.
- Pregnant women may not stay in the CT room for the scan.

### For your child

- Your child will be asked to lie still during the scan.
- Your child may hear some beeping, clicking and whirring sounds as the CT scanner takes the images.
- The technologist will give the contrast medicine through your child's IV during the scan. Your child may have a warm feeling throughout his/her body.
- The CT scanner will not touch your child's body while the picture are taken.
- At times during the CT scan, the technologist may ask your child to hold his or her breath for a short period (10 to 20 seconds). This helps to take clearer pictures of the heart.

### How long it takes

The CT scan may last from a few seconds to 10 minutes.

### Getting the results

The medical team will review the images and share results with your child's cardiologist, who will call you with the information. This usually takes several days.

## HOW DO I EXPLAIN THE CT SCAN TO MY CHILD?

It is important that you talk to your child before the appointment to prepare for this scan. Learning and understanding what to expect helps children cope better before, during and after the medical procedure.

There are some free apps you can download to help prepare your child for the MRI.

**Okee** (available on Android, iPad and iPhone) is a free app you can download to help a child under 8 years old understand the CT scan and prepare for what the scan might be like.

- This app has games to help prepare your child for contrast and how the camera looks.
- Your child can watch a video to understand what to do during a CT scan.

## WHERE CAN I TURN FOR HELP?

You can call the Kentucky Children's Hospital Child Life Department at **(859) 323-6551**. Child Life Specialists can help your child and other family members prepare for and cope with the procedures the day of the appointment. It is important to call if:

- Your child has developmental delays or other special needs.
- Your child has had difficult or traumatic hospital experiences.
- Your child has a lot of anxiety about the procedure.
- You are unsure if your child can complete the CT scan awake.

