



## Radiation Safety

### Learn about the risks and benefits of common medical imaging procedures.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), healthcare providers can use images for testing to find out what is causing your health problem or to guide treatment.

The type of imaging procedure that your healthcare provider may suggest will depend on your health concern and the part of the body that is being examined. Some common examples of imaging tests include:

- X-rays
- CT or CAT (computerized axial tomography) scans
- Fluoroscopy
- Nuclear medicine

### Imaging in High-Risk Populations

#### **If You Are Pregnant or May Be Pregnant**

Always tell your healthcare provider and radiologist (i.e., a medical professional certified to conduct imaging studies with radiation) if you are pregnant or think you could be pregnant.

If there is any chance you could be pregnant but have not confirmed it, they may ask you to take a pregnancy test. If you are pregnant, your healthcare provider may decide that it would be best to cancel the medical imaging procedure, to postpone it until after you give birth, or to modify it to reduce your exposure to radiation.

#### **If Your Child Needs an Imaging Procedure**

Although radiation exposure from imaging is very low, children are slightly more likely to be affected by radiation than adults. Being exposed to radiation at a young age means that they have more time for radiation exposure to add up and possibly cause cancer. It is important that imaging procedures performed on children use the least amount of radiation needed.

#### **How to Limit Exposure**

Medical imaging tests should be performed only when necessary.

The best way to make sure you are not getting more exposure to radiation than necessary from imaging studies is to keep track of imaging procedures and make sure each healthcare provider or specialist you see receives your results. You could also ask your healthcare provider if tests that do not use radiation, like MRIs or ultrasounds, could provide the needed information instead.

Please visit the CDC's [Radiation and Your Health](#) website for more information.

