What is a CT scan?
CT scanning is an imaging study that uses x-rays taken from a series of different angles and arranged by a computer to create pictures of cross-sections of the body. A CT scan can focus on the chest, abdomen and pelvis, brain or spine.

When is it used?
CT scanning provides more detailed information than regular x-rays. CT scans are especially useful for identifying tumors, enlarged lymph nodes, and cysts.

What happens during the procedure?
The patient lies on a narrow table that slides into the center of the CT scanner. Once the patient is in the scanner, the x-ray beam of the machine rotates around the patient, and the computer creates images (slices) of the portion of the body being scanned. The images are projected onto a TV screen and prepared for examination by the physician.

A solution of dye (also called contrast) may be injected into a vein, or you may be asked to swallow a contrast solution. This allows the scanner to show more detail, particularly of abnormal areas, as the dye circulates through the body.

Scans rarely last longer than 30-45 minutes. They are painless, and the patient can talk to the technologist at any time during the procedure. Sedation is available if the patient becomes overly anxious.
**Risks of CT scanning**

- an allergic reaction to the contrast dye: delayed reaction to the dye can cause itching, rash, sweating, or trouble breathing. The patient should drink plenty of fluids after the scan to rid the body of the dye
- kidney damage from the dye
- exposure to radiation

**How do I prepare for this procedure?**

- Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing should be worn to the exam. A gown to wear is usually provided during the procedure.
- Metal objects, including jewelry, eyeglasses, dentures and hairpins may affect the CT images and should be left at home or removed prior to the scan.
- Be sure the health care provider knows if you are allergic to any medicines or chemicals such as iodine.
- Refrain from eating or drinking for 4 hours before the scan.

**When should I call my doctor?**

- If you develop signs of an allergy to iodine contrast: nausea or vomiting, sneezing, itching or hives within the first few hours after the CT scan. Such an allergic reaction can be treated with antihistamines (Benadryl) or steroids.

**Who should I call if I have questions?**

- Please contact our clinic at 734-936-8857 during office hours (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- After hours, holidays, and on weekends call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the General Thoracic Surgery Resident on call.