

# LANCASTER RADIOLOGY ASSOCIATES, LTD.

## **CAT/CT SCAN**

### **What it is:**

Computed tomography (CT), originally known as computed axial tomography (CAT or CT scan), is a diagnostic imaging method that is used to create three-dimensional, cross-sectional images of internal parts of the human body. Images are created from the reflection of X-Rays off tissues of varying densities. CT scanning is an improvement over conventional X-Ray imaging because it captures higher-resolution images.

### **What you need to know:**

Because CT scans use X-Rays, the body is exposed to radiation. These radiation doses are very small, but in high enough amounts can potentially damage cells and increase a person's risk for cancer.

Patients that may be unsuited for a CT scan include patients who:

- Are pregnant (fetuses are vulnerable to X-Ray radiation);
- Have an allergy to contrast dye (rare);
- Have unstable vital signs
- Are claustrophobic.

### **How to prepare:**

In most cases, avoid solid foods for 4 hours before the procedure, but clear liquids such as juice are acceptable. Before the test, you will be asked to change into a gown and remove any jewelry or other objects that may interfere with X-Rays.