

Patient FAQs

Why can't I get my exam as scheduled?

Our radiologists use contrast dye to help us better see and understand the CT scan images we take of your body. The supplies of this dye have been affected by supply chain issues related to COVID-19 lockdowns in China. Right now, our supplies of this dye are low enough that we need to reserve them for patients with emergencies.

When did the supply chain issue start? When will the dye be back in stock?

Problems getting this dye started in late April 2022. Right now, we don't know when it will be back in stock. This problem could last through the summer.

What is iodinated contrast?

This is the dye we use for CT scans and other exams. It's a prescription medicine that's usually put into the body through an IV to help us check different organs for problems such as infection, inflammation, cancer, and other things. The contrast often helps us make a diagnosis during a CT exam.

Are you canceling my scan?

Depending on your situation, two things may happen. Your CT exam may be rescheduled to later this year. Or we may schedule you for a different type of exam. The provider who ordered your original exam will decide. Someone from our scheduling team will help you find a new appointment.

When am I going to be able to get my exam?

Right now, we think we'll get the contrast dye back in stock later this summer. Rescheduled appointments will begin at that time.

What if you don't get the dye back in stock by later this summer? Will I be rescheduled again?

Maybe, but that would only happen if this problem continues well into the summer.

I need an exam right away. Do I have any options?

There are other types of exams that might help us with your case. For example, your provider may have you come in for a CT scan that doesn't use contrast dye, an ultrasound, or an MRI. It will depend on your specific situation. Your provider will make the best decision for you.

What if I don't get my CT scan as originally scheduled? How does that affect my medical care?

Every person is different. Sometimes, we need imaging results to make decisions about surgery, medicines, or other treatments. A different type of exam might help us with your case. It might also be OK for you to wait until later this summer to get your CT scan. Your provider will work with you to make the best decision for you.

If Vanderbilt doesn't have contrast dye, can I just go somewhere else for my CT?

Maybe – the dye shortage is happening around the world. Many other health systems and imaging centers are having the same problem. There may be some places that are still offering CT scans with

contrast, but that can change on a day-to-day basis depending on the supply of contrast on hand that day.

If I go somewhere else, will my Vanderbilt providers still see my results?

If you go outside Vanderbilt for your CT scan, your doctor will not be able to automatically see the images from that scan in our records. You should ask for a CD of your images and a printout of your exam report. You can then bring it to your next appointment at Vanderbilt.

If I go somewhere else, will my insurance cover it?

You'll need to check with the imaging site to see if they accept your insurance.

If I get a different type of exam now, will I still be able to get a CT exam later this year?

Yes, in many cases, your original CT scan will be rescheduled for later this year even if you get a different type of exam now.

I have questions about my specific situation. Who should I talk to?

Please contact your provider's office with your questions and concerns. You can call them on the phone or send them a message through My Health at Vanderbilt.