What you should know about your **Lower or Upper Extremity CT**.

**Purpose:**
Computed Tomography (CT) uses special x-ray equipment and a powerful computer to create detailed images of the human body. CT is specifically good at seeing several types of tissue—lung, bones, organs and blood vessels with great clarity. It is an excellent diagnostic tool for evaluating many different disease processes and injuries.

**Preparation:**
- X-ray dye may be needed to enhance your exam. If you are allergic to the x-ray dye you may need to be pre-medicated. You may pick up the medicine from any Wellspan Pharmacy at least a day before your exam. Premedication consists of a combination of steroids and antihistamines (Benadryl), so please inform us or your physician if you cannot take either of these medicines. Taking antihistamines can cause drowsiness so you will need someone to drive you to and from your appointment. An order for these medications is included on the WellSpan York Hospital CT referral form, or you can contact your physician for an order for these medications.
- If you are 18 years or older, have diabetes, kidney failure or a history of kidney failure you must have a creatinine blood test within 30 days prior to the procedure. The CT referral form includes a tear-off lab order form. This form should be given to you by your physician.
- You should not have anything to eat three hours before your exam time. We also encourage you to drink two liters of water before coming for your exam.
- Wear comfortable clothing free of metal zippers and snaps. You may be asked to remove watches, necklaces, earrings or other metal objects if they may interfere with the exam.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothing and to wear a gown during the exam.
- Please arrive 20 minutes prior to exam.
- It is important to tell a staff member if you are or may be pregnant.

**Procedure: What to Expect**
- You will be asked to verify your name, date of birth and the exam you will be having performed.
- A technologist or nurse will ask you questions and gather a brief history about your health before the exam.
- If x-ray dye is needed for your exam, the technologist will explain the risks to you and ask you to sign a consent form. A small needle is placed in an arm or hand vein that connects to plastic tubing. The dye is then injected.
- While the x-ray dye is injected you will experience a hot sensation, and you may get a metallic taste in your mouth.
The CT scanner looks like a large square donut with a narrow table in the middle. The x-ray tube and detectors spin inside the scanner as the table moves in and out of the center opening. While the scanner is spinning you will hear a whirling noise. The technologist begins by positioning you on the table. As the exam begins the table will move you in and out of the machine. It is very important that you remain perfectly still during the exam.

- The time in the scanner is approximately five minutes.

**Risks and Benefits:**

- CT does expose you to radiation in the form of x-rays, but the benefit of an accurate diagnosis far outweighs the risk. The amount of radiation received is about the same as the amount of radiation the average person receives from the environment over a three year period.

- The CTs at WellSpan York Hospital and the WellSpan Imaging Center at Apple Hill have modern technology that allows the technologist to perform your CT scan using approximately half the radiation dose compared to that of conventional CT scanners.

**After the Test:**

- If you took the premedication for your exam the technologists will encourage you to remain in the department for approximately 20 minutes in case a reaction to the x-ray dye should occur.

- If you received x-ray dye, the needle will be removed prior to leaving the scanning room.

- You may change into your normal clothing and gather your valuables.

- A staff member will escort you back to the reception area.

- If you were injected with x-ray dye we encourage you to drink plenty of water following your exam. The dye is removed from your system by your kidneys and water helps the process.

- Your exam will be evaluated by a radiologist and the report will be sent to your physician.

**Imaging Department Phone Number:**

(717) 851-4624