

NEWS RELEASE



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CT technicians monitors the controls of the new \$700,000 CT as the patient is quickly scanned.

PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS PRAISE NEW CT SCANNER

Halifax Regional Invests \$700,000 in Cutting Edge Technology

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC – (July 16, 2008) – Patients at Halifax Regional now experience less discomfort during diagnostic scans that provide physicians with more detailed images with the purchase of a \$700,000 Siemens CT scanner.

A CT scan is an x-ray procedure that provides more detailed images of the inside of the body in areas such as the brain, heart, lungs, liver and kidneys, which cannot be seen in the same detail by standard x-ray examinations. “We are capable of producing sharp three dimensional images which allow us to see abnormalities as small as a one millimeter stone in the kidneys,” said Bert Piggott Jr., MD, radiologist at Halifax Regional. “The new scanner improves our ability to identify and diagnose potentially life-threatening diseases, such as early stage cancers or blood clots in the lungs. Early detection is the key to successful treatment,” he added.

The scanner produces images much faster than older models, reducing the anxiety level of patients who find it uncomfortable to remain motionless or hold their breath. “I was really scared,” said Paul Askew, who recently had his first CT scan performed at Halifax Regional. “The staff went out of their way to make me comfortable. They calmed my fears by explaining what was going to happen, step-by-step.” Askew said he was surprised that the procedure was so quick and easy.

X-rays are painless. As with other x-ray procedures, CT scans are monitored by technologists so patients receive the lowest amount of radiation exposure necessary. Patients using Halifax Regional’s new scanner are exposed to 66 percent less radiation than the old machine.

Doctors recommend CT scans to help evaluate potential problems in areas such as the:

- Brain

- Abdomen & Pelvis
- Chest
- Blood vessels

CT scans also are useful in facilitating biopsy procedures, which entail the removal of a sample of tissue for diagnostic evaluation. This allows cancers to be diagnosed at a smaller size and more treatable stage, with minimal risk to patients.

During a CT scan, a thin x-ray beam rotates around the patient, while special detectors measure the amount of x-ray that passes through the patient's body. A computer analyzes these measurements, creating cross-sectional images of the area being scanned. By stacking these images—also known as “slices”—the computer can assemble a 3-D image of the organs in your body.

Depending on the area being examined, you may be asked to drink water or refrain from eating before the test. In the CT imaging room, you will lie on a table that moves through a large, donut-shaped scanning machine. The machine will make clicking and whirring sounds as the scan proceeds. You lie as still as possible throughout the procedures because moving can blur the images. At times, the technologist also may ask you to hold your breath while certain images are taken.

Most scans take from 8 to 24 seconds based on the area or organ being scanned. The results of the scan are reviewed by a radiologist.

An additional benefit for patients at Halifax Regional is that the speed of the new scanner will result in reducing the wait time for appointments.

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About Halifax Regional: *Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 206-beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.us.*