

## Official policy on Head CAT scans

Here at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, we pride ourselves on excellence in patient care, as well as being at the forefront of evidence-based medicine.

One of those ways we have identified over the past several years is by reducing unnecessary CAT scan imaging. Through our emergency department alone, we perform almost 30,000 CAT scans yearly, with about 8000 of those being CAT scans of the head. Of that number, only a small percentage of those find clinically significant brain injuries that require intervention.

In addition, CAT scans are thought to be responsible for up to 25% of all radiation exposure in the US annually, and can increase a patient's lifetime risk of cancer by up to 10% if receiving multiple CAT scans per year.

Therefore, by applying scientifically defined selection criteria, we can safely reduce our patient's exposure to radiation without missing findings that would impact medical management.

### **Traumatic brain injuries**

So, why are you receiving this paper on CAT scan policy?

Because you do not take blood thinners, do not have a history of bleeding, and do not exhibit symptoms of a brain bleed (inability to wake up, seizures, slurred speech), we do not feel you require a CAT scan at this time.

Instead, you have been identified as having a concussion - a category of minor traumatic brain injury (TBI). This type of injury is not life threatening, and does not often cause fractures of the skull or bleeding into the brain. Concussions are also NOT seen on CAT scan imaging as they are microscopic injuries.



Rather concussions are a diagnosis based on clinical symptoms alone.

Concussion symptoms include:

- “not feeling right” / feeling “foggy”
- headache, blurred vision
- nausea, dizziness
- sensitivity to light or noise
- sleep disruptions
- feeling irritable
- difficulty paying attention
- confusion, memory issues

Concussions are the most common type of brain injury, and frequently occur after car accidents, falls from low heights, or sports related injuries.

For about 90% of all patients, concussion symptoms go away in a few days to a few months.

### **Treatment Plan**

The treatment for concussions is brain rest and avoiding activities that could cause another injury such as weight lifting, sports, or other heavy activity. Talk to your friends, family, and employers to let them know you may need some extra help over the next few days to weeks while you recover.

Follow up on one of our fantastic TBI clinics at the University of Cincinnati.

**NEUROTRAUMA Clinic – 513-584-2804**

**SPORTS MEDICINE Clinic – 513-475-8690**

Our teams of specialists offer quick follow up and comprehensive care to help you return to normal as soon as possible.