

## Physicians urge limits on CT scan radiation exposure

By [Catherine Bertram](#)



[Several articles](#) in a recent issue of the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) call for increased regulation of the use of x-ray computed tomography, or CT scans. The procedure can expose patients to often unnecessary and/or concerning levels of radiation.

The [FDA regulates CT scanners](#) but does not require physicians to use the machines in a particular way or limit the amount of radiation patients are exposed to. A CT scan normally exposes a patient to 100 to 200 times the radiation from a standard chest x-ray. A [2007 study](#) by Columbia University estimates that these CT scans may lead to a very small increase (2%) of all cancer cases down the line.

Two separate studies were able to use special techniques to reduce radiation exposure by 66 to 90 percent. But right now, all the limits on radiation are self-imposed by physicians and not consistently applied.

Congress should strongly consider legislature that empowers the FDA to regulate radiation doses. In the meantime, physicians and hospitals should investigate and promote techniques that limit and reduce radiation exposure whenever possible.