



**Mayo Clinic Heritage Films
Discussion Guide**

**A New Way of Seeing
The First CAT Scan at Mayo Clinic**



In 1972, Mayo Clinic neuroradiologist Hillier L. Baker, Jr., M.D., flew to England to see an entirely new type of X-ray device invented by Godfrey Hounsfield of the British firm EMI. It was called computerized axial tomography—CAT, for short. Using an X-ray tube and the latest computer technology, the scanner produced the most detailed pictures of a living brain ever seen. After two days of evaluation, Dr. Baker placed an order for an “EMI-Scanner” on the spot.

The next year, Mayo became the first medical center in North America to offer this new imaging option to its patients. Medical professionals from around the world came to Mayo to see the machine in action. CAT scanning marked the beginning of a new era in radiology, providing a safer, more effective way of looking at the brain and, within a few years, the entire body.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you or someone you know benefited from CAT scanning?
2. Why do you think Dr. Baker was so intent on Mayo Clinic being first in line for a CAT scanner?
3. What are the advantages of being an early adopter of new technology? What are the risks?

4. Why do you think some neuroradiologists were skeptical about the new device?
5. How would you feel about being the first person to have a new type of procedure or test?
6. How important is to you that your health care provider have access to the latest medical technology?
7. What did you think of Mayo granting an exception to their usual procedures to speed the process of acquiring the scanner?