

# INFO

## CTA of the Coronary Arteries

I N F O R M A T I O N F O R P A T I E N T S

### What is a CTA of the Coronary Arteries?

CT Angiography is a noninvasive imaging study that helps see fat and calcium deposits that have accumulated in the coronary arteries. These deposits, called plaques, can lead to blockages which can cause chest pain, shortness of breath, and/or heart attacks. If you have high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, a family history of heart disease, diabetes, and/or smoke, you may be at risk for developing these plaques.

### Who should consider CTA of the Coronary Arteries?

Patients should discuss with their primary physician or cardiologist whether this study would be helpful to assess their cardiac health. The most common reasons to order a CTA of the Coronary Arteries are to:

- Assess individuals with atypical symptoms for coronary artery disease (such as chest pain or shortness of breath unrelated to physical exertion).
- Evaluate symptomatic high-risk patients with normal stress tests who are not candidates for cardiac catheterization.
- Further evaluate cardiac health after inconclusive stress test results or stress test results that don't match the patient's symptoms.
- Evaluate cardiac bypass grafts and/or stents for blockages.

### How is this study performed?

Pictures are taken of the heart and coronary arteries using a special type of x-ray machine called a 64-slice multi-detector CT scanner. These pictures are obtained while contrast dye is given intravenously. The patient lies on an open table within a large donut-like structure that takes the pictures. The CTA scan is pain-free and takes 10 minutes.

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## **How is CTA of the Coronary Arteries different from other cardiovascular tests?**

CTA is the only noninvasive way to directly see plaque in the coronary arteries. CTA provides actual pictures of your arteries to help to accurately and painlessly assess your cardiac health.

Coronary catheterization is a more invasive test requiring a catheter (small tube) to be threaded into the coronary arteries. Dye is injected and pictures are taken. Although cardiac catheterization is excellent at finding blockages, unlike coronary CTA, it cannot see plaque in the walls of the coronary arteries that are not yet causing narrowing. Early detection aids early treatment. If a patient has a large blockage seen with CTA, then cardiac catheterization may be required later to open the blockage.

Another test, called a stress test, can be performed in conjunction with coronary CTA to see how well the heart muscle is functioning.

## **How do I prepare for a CTA of the Coronary Arteries?**

To prepare for the CTA study, the patient should not eat for 4 hours prior to their scheduled appointment and should not drink or eat caffeinated products for 12 hours prior to their appointment. The patient should not exercise on the day of the exam.

If you have further questions, please visit [www.univrad.com](http://www.univrad.com) or call us at 800-758-5545.

