

PREP

CARDIAC SCORING

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

This information will help you prepare for your heart scan.

Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring is a CT scan of your heart that may help your physician estimate your risk of a future heart attack.

What is Coronary Artery Disease?

Coronary artery disease, also known as atherosclerosis, is narrowing of the coronary arteries, which are the vessels that supply blood to the heart muscle. This narrowing restricts blood flow to the heart muscle and may lead to a heart attack.

Why are coronary artery calcifications important?

Because coronary artery disease is the sole cause of coronary artery calcium deposits. Measuring the amount of coronary artery calcium helps estimate the amount of coronary artery disease.

How can measuring coronary artery calcifications help my doctor?

In individuals without symptoms such as chest pain, a physician will estimate a patient's risk of having significant coronary artery disease by assessing the known risk factors, which include age, gender, cholesterol level, smoking, obesity, hypertension and family history of prior heart attacks. In recent years it has become clear that Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring may also help your physician estimate your risk of a future cardiac event.

How does the test work?

A rapid CT scan of your heart is performed. The CT scan is transferred to a computer workstation and the amount and density of the calcifications are measured. The computer calculates a "Coronary Artery Calcium Score." This score is an estimate of the amount of coronary artery disease present.

Does this test measure the degree of narrowing in my coronary arteries?

No. This test is not an angiogram nor is it a substitute for an angiogram.

What if I have symptoms such as chest pain or lightheadedness?

You should discuss your symptoms with your doctor right away.

What if I have questions?

The best person to talk with is your doctor. If you have additional questions, our staff will be happy to speak with you.

What if I need to reschedule my test?

Please call us as soon as possible if you need to reschedule your appointment.

Patient Preparation

No tobacco, coffee, caffeinated soda, or chocolate for 6 hours prior to the test.

No vigorous exercise for 24 hours prior to the test.

No gum chewing on the day of the test.

Eat and take medications as normal.