

# CT Coronary Calcium Scoring

## Patient Information



### What is CT Coronary Calcium Scoring?

Computed Tomography (CT) Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring is a special CT Scan that measures the amount of calcium in the arteries of your heart (coronary arteries). The calcium resides in plaque on the walls of the arteries. It is plaque that narrows the arteries and predisposes you to heart attacks and other heart disease. The amount of calcified plaque is measured and combined with other information such as your age and sex, to give a number (Agatston score). This Agatston score tells us your statistical risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

### How is the test done?

CT Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring is performed just like a normal CT scan. It takes about 10 – 15 minutes. You will be asked to lie on your back on the CT table. The radiographer (the medical imaging technologist performing the test) will place electrocardiogram (ECG) leads on your chest. You will be asked to breathe in and hold your breath several times while the machine takes the images. The CT scanner assesses your heart beat and calculates when it wants to take the scans.

The radiographer then processes the images and with the aid of the computer software, measures the amount of calcified plaque in your coronary arteries and produces your Agatston score.

### Is any contrast injected?

No.

### Will it hurt?

No. This examination is non-invasive.

### Is there any preparation?

Yes. While you do not need to fast as no IV contrast is injected, on the day of the test you must not take caffeine (no coffee, tea, caffeinated soft drinks or chocolate) and

you must not smoke. You should also not exercise immediately prior to the test.

It is recommended you arrive 30 minutes prior to your appointment. When you arrive, you will be given a questionnaire to fill out. You will be asked if you have any heart disease or if you are on any medications for your heart.

If your pulse rate is high, will we need to give you a tablet (Beta-blocker) to lower your heart rate.

Please keep taking your usual medications.

### What happens after the procedure?

You can go about your normal activities. Examinations are reported by our Radiologists credentialed by the 'Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in CT Coronary Angiography'

Reporting usually takes a minimum of 24hrs after your examination is completed.

### How much will it cost?

CT Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring is currently not covered by Medicare and thus incurs an out of pocket fee; advised when booking your appointment.

### What are the risks of CT Artery Calcium Scoring?

As in all x-ray scans, there is radiation used. The radiation dose is small. These scans should not be done if you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant. If you have concerns about the radiation risk, even though it is very small, please discuss this with your doctor or the radiologist supervising the scan.

A high calcium score does not mean that you are at risk of having a heart attack, only that you are much more likely to have one than someone with a low score. Even with a zero calcium score you could still have a heart attack.

