

CT Coronary Calcium Scoring

What is CT Coronary Calcium Scoring?

Computed Tomography (CT) Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring is a non invasive CT Scan that measures the amount of calcium in the arteries of your heart (coronary arteries). 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 Non contrast CT scan. It takes 10 – 15 minutes. You will be asked to lie on your back on the CT table and the radiographer will place electrocardiogram (ECG) leads on your chest. You will be required to breathe in and hold your breath several times while the machine takes the images.

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.

What are the risks of CT Coronary Calcium Scoring?

There is a small radiation dose and it is recommended that these scans not be performed 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 referring doctor or the staff supervising the scan.

Is there any Preparation?

Yes.

In the 24 hour period prior to your scan **avoid all caffeine, smoking and Viagra**. Note, there is caffeine in coffee, tea, sports drinks, soft drinks and chocolate. Please avoid exercise on the day of the test.

If your heart rate is greater than 75bpm, your referring practitioner may need to prescribe you medication to slow this down. The optimal heart rate for this scan is 65bpm +/-5bpm.

Fasting is not necessary but do not have a large meal prior to your scan. Continue taking your usual medications.

Please ensure you wear a 2 piece outfit (ie shirt and pants) and remove all jewellery.

How much will it cost?

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

What happens after the procedure?

You can go about your normal activities.

Examinations are reported by our Radiologist credentialed by the 'Conjoint Committee for the Recognition of Training in CT Coronary Angiography'.

Reporting usually takes a minimum of 24 hours after your examination is completed and you can follow this up with your referring practitioner.

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.

For branch details and other services, please visit our website www.ncrg.com.au or call 1300 669 729.

