

# CARDIAC COMPUTED ANGIOGRAM (CARDIAC CTA)

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## Before the test

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## Cardiac Computed Angiogram (Cardiac CTA)

### Before the test

- To prepare for the test, it is important not to have anything to eat or drink for four hours before your scan.
- We also ask that you do not consume any products that contain nicotine (such as cigarettes) for four hours, as nicotine will interfere with the results of your test.
- It is extremely important that you refrain from ALL CAFFEINE or products containing CAFFEINE for 48 hours prior to the test such as:
  - Coffee
  - Decaffeinated products (also contain small amounts of caffeine)
  - Tea
  - Soft drinks and soda
  - Carbonated drinks
  - Coke
  - Chocolate (all kinds)
  - Energy drinks
  - Caffeine-containing medications including anti-migraine medications and diet medications
- Wear comfortable clothing. Depending on your exam, you may need to remove clothing and jewelry.
- Please bring all your previous imaging (X-ray, MRI, CT, etc.) study results, such as reports, films or CD-ROMs if available.

### About the test

### What is this test?

A Cardiac Computed Tomography Angiogram (Cardiac CTA) uses X-ray technology with a circular detector in combination intravenous (IV) contrast (dye), to obtain high-resolution, three-dimensional images of your:

- Heart
- Coronary arteries
- Pulmonary veins
- Thoracic aorta
- And the heart sac (pericardium)

### **What will happen to me during the test?**

When you arrive for your scan, you will be given a questionnaire to complete that will give the staff the information they need to prepare for your exam. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will be escorted to the CT scan room, where an IV will be inserted for the administration of contrast.

You will have EKG leads placed so the CT scanner can monitor your heart rate. Depending on your heart rate, a nurse may have to give you a beta-blocker to slow down your heart rate to be able to acquire the images. If you receive a beta-blocker to lower your heart rate, an EKG and blood pressure monitor will be applied. You will lay on the CT scanner bed with your arms over your head and will be moved into the CT scanner.

You will be given a series of breathing instructions. It is important to follow these instructions as movement will blur the images and make it difficult to read. Once ready, the exam usually takes less than five minutes.

The CT staff will take a few sets of scans without contrast and this will be followed by a few scans with contrast. It is normal to feel a warm sensation (hot flush) when the contrast is being administered. This warm sensation lasts for about 30 seconds. Some people may have a metallic taste. If you experience difficulty breathing please inform the technologist.

### **Are there after-test restrictions for me to follow?**

Following the exam, you may wait for the results of your Calcium score. This may take an additional 5 to 15 minutes depending upon the availability of the technologist. The technologist will then transfer the exam images to our radiologists, who specialize in examining images of the heart.

The radiologist will then dictate a diagnostic report, which upon finalization is sent to your physician.

A CT scan is a low-risk procedure. Occasionally, patients experience an adverse reaction to the contrast agent. Some patients develop itching or a rash following the injection. These symptoms are usually self-limiting and resolve without further treatment. Antihistamines can be administered if needed for symptomatic relief. Rarely, a more serious allergic reaction called an anaphylactic reaction, occurs, which may result in breathing difficulty. This reaction is potentially life-threatening and would require medications and treatment to reverse the symptoms. CT scanners use X-rays. For your safety, the amount of radiation exposure is kept to a minimum.

### **How will I know the results of my test?**

- Your test results will be sent to the physician who ordered the test. During your follow-up appointment, your referring physician will discuss the results of your test.

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