

CT Coronary Angiogram Scan

General Information

A computerized tomography (CT) coronary angiogram is an X-ray imaging scan that looks at your heart and the arteries that supply your heart with blood.

You will receive a contrast through an intravenous (IV) line placed in your arm. The contrast will make your heart's arteries visible on the images taken by the CT scanner. The scan can show plaque (fatty deposits) which can cause blockage, limited blood flow in the arteries or both.

No surgery is needed and there is no recovery time.

The scan takes 12 to 30 seconds but you will be in the CT scanning room for about 15 to 20 minutes. The entire CT process takes 1 to 2 ½ hours (from the time you arrive to the time you leave), depending on your heart rate when you arrive. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

What to Tell Your Health Care Provider

Before the day of your scan tell your health care provider if you:

- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- have had a contrast reaction during an X-ray, CT, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or angiogram test. You may need a medicine before the scan.

Before the Scan

- Do not take Viagra[®], Levitra[®] or Cialis[®] for 72 hours before your scan.
- Do not eat or drink anything with caffeine the day of your scan. This can increase your heart rate and make it hard to get clear images of your heart. Do not have:
 - any type of coffee or tea
 - soda with caffeine
 - chocolate
 - medicines that have caffeine unless your health care provider gives you other directions.
- Do not eat anything for 2 hours before your scan.
- Take your regular medicines with water the morning of your scan, unless your health care provider tells you otherwise.
- If you take a medicine containing metformin for diabetes, you will be given additional instructions at the time of your scan. You may need to stop taking this medicine for 48 hours after you receive the contrast.
- You will remove clothing and any jewelry above your waist and change into a hospital gown.
- An IV line will be started in your arm.
- If you have not had a recent creatinine blood test, you will need one before the scan. This is a test that measures kidney function. This test may be done at the time your IV is started.

(over)

- The nurse or technologist will place some electrodes on your chest to record your heart rate during the scan.

During the Scan

- You may be given a beta-blocker (medicine) which slows your heart rate. This will help the CT machine get clearer images.
- You will lie on a long table that slides into a short, doughnut-shaped machine.
- The technologist will go into a control room. He or she will talk with you through an intercom.
- You will be asked to hold your breath for a brief time. Lying still during the scan is important. Any movement can blur the X-ray images.
- You may be given a nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue to make your arteries big (dilated). This will help the cardiologist see inside the arteries.
- The contrast is given through the IV in your arm. You may feel a warmth or flushing throughout your body. You may also have the sensation of urinating during the injection. These feelings last about 2 minutes.

After the Scan

- You will sit in a waiting area for about 15 minutes to make sure you don't have a reaction to the contrast.
- Your IV will be removed and you may return to your normal activity for the rest of the day.
- Drink four to six 8-ounce glasses of water to help flush the contrast from your body.
- If you have a reaction such as itching or hives, please call your health care provider.
- **If you start wheezing, have shortness of breath or trouble swallowing, call 911 right away.**

CT Scan Results

- A cardiologist will look at the images of your heart.
- A radiologist will look at anatomy outside of your heart, such as your lungs, on the images.
- The results will be given to your health care provider within 5 business days.