



Coronary CT Angiogram

What is a Coronary CT Angiogram?

A Coronary CT Angiogram, sometimes called CCTA, is a new cardiac imaging study that is performed on a 64-slice CT scanner. The scanner creates a 3D picture of your heart, giving doctors a very clear and immediate view of your heart, the valves, the heart muscle and the blood vessels.

What is the purpose of a CCTA?

- To visualize the coronary arteries and assess for narrowing and atherosclerosis.
- To evaluate atypical chest pain.
- To evaluate unusual coronary arteries.
- Surgical planning for complex cardiac surgery.

How do you prepare for the exam?

- You may take your prescription medications unless they are noted in this information.
- No food or drink four hours prior to your scheduled exam time.
- No Caffeine 24 hours prior to your scheduled exam time.
- No Sudafed 24 hours prior to your scheduled exam time.
- No Viagra, Cialis, or Levitra for 7 days prior to your scheduled exam.
- At the time of the exam, you will disrobe above the waist and put on a gown. Please leave earrings and necklaces at home, this type jewelry will interfere with your scan. Please wear comfortable clothing.
- You will receive IV contrast for this exam. Contrast is necessary to highlight certain structures in your heart. You must tell your physician if you have any allergies, especially to iodine, prior to this exam.
- If you have kidney disease or severe diabetes, you and your physician should discuss the risks associated with contrast material.
- **You cannot take Glucovance, Glucophage, Metformin, Avandamet, Glucophage XR or Metaglip for 48 hours after receiving IV contrast and your kidney function is checked.**
- Women should always inform their doctor or x-ray technologist if there is any possibility of pregnancy.
- If you have moderate/severe Asthma and are on bronchodilators, this may be a contraindication to administer Beta Blockers needed to lower your heart rate.

What happens before the exam?

You will receive an IV in one of your arms and 3 EKG leads will be placed on your chest. Your heart rate will be monitored prior to the exam and during the exam. If your heart rate is above 65 beats per minute, you may receive a beta blocker to slow your rate. This is why it is very important to avoid any type of stimulant prior to your exam.

What happens during the exam?

A technologist will position you on the examination table. You will lie on your back with your arms above your head, resting on a pillow. You will then be moved into the doughnut-shaped scanner. As the equipment scans, you will hear the whirring sound of the machinery. You will be asked to hold your breath several times, for about 20 seconds each time. You may want to practice this at home.

You will feel warm all over when the contrast material is injected, but you should not feel pain at any time. The scan takes about 10 to 25 minutes from the time the actual exam begins.

What happens after the exam?

If you received beta blocker medication, your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored for about 20 minutes after the test. If you did not use beta blockers, you will be free to leave after your IV has been removed and you are not experiencing the sensations from the contrast medicine.

The results of your scan will be carefully reviewed to evaluate the health of your heart and coronary arteries and determine if further medical attention is recommended. A report will be sent to your personal physician.

