

Cardiac CT Angiogram – Patient Information Sheet

What is Cardiac CT Angiography?

Cardiac CT refers to images obtained of your heart and coronary arteries using a Computed Tomography (CT) scanner.

The scanner takes multiple pictures of the heart and the coronary arteries. You will be lying flat on the scanner table and the scanner will rotate around you. By doing this, the scanner is able to generate a three-dimensional (3D) picture of your heart.

You will be lying on the scanning table for approximately 10 to 15 minutes. It is important that you remain as still as possible throughout the scan. Each image is obtained in less than one second and the scan is completely painless. At no time will you be confined to a small space, nor will you have to enter into an imaging tunnel. The entire scan is performed in an open room with plenty of natural light.

You will need to:

- Arrive 1 hour prior to your appointment to allow for preparation of your scan.
- Stop all caffeine (tea, herbal tea, coffee, cola, chocolate, milo, sports drinks or energy drinks) cigarettes and Viagra for 12 hours before the scan.
- Fast from food **for two hours** before the scan.
- **Continue to drink** normally remembering not to have any caffeine. It is important to **be well hydrated** before your scan.
- Minimise physical exertion on the day of the scan.
- Advise our staff when you make your appointment if you have asthma, diabetes, kidney problems, a pacemaker, difficult veins, portacath, or have had a previous allergy to contrast agents used in a radiology procedure. Please note that an allergy to topical iodine is very different to being allergic to contrast agents.
- Have a recent kidney function test if you are diabetic, have kidney disease (including having had a kidney removed) or taking medication called Metformin. We can arrange to send you a request form if you need one

What will happen?

Once you have registered with the reception staff the nurse will call you to prepare you for your scan. You will be asked about your medical history, including any allergies you may have. Your heart rate will be checked and if your heart rate is above 60 you may be given medication called a beta blocker to lower your heart rate. This can be tablets or an injectable medicine.

Once your heart rate is steady at or below 60 you will be taken into the CT scanning room where you will lay on the scanning table. ECG leads will be placed on your chest to monitor the rhythm of your heart. A cannula (plastic tube) is inserted into a vein in your arm and will stay there till after your scan is complete. This is how the contrast will be injected into your vein. You will receive a rapid intravenous injection of contrast just before the scan commences. You may experience a brief flushed feeling and /or a metallic taste from the contrast injection. It is also common to feel a sensation in the pelvis or bladder area which can make feel that you need to urinate or that you have urinated.

You will be asked to hold your breath for approximately 10 to 15 seconds as the table moves in and out of the scanner.

When the scan is complete you will be able to walk to the recovery bay where the nurse will re-check your blood pressure and heart rate again. If your blood pressure is stable and you are not feeling any dizziness or unwell you may be able to leave straight away. It can sometimes take an hour or more for your blood pressure and heart rate to return to normal so you may be here for a few hours from the time you first arrive.

Because everyone reacts differently to medication, we suggest that you bring someone with you who can drive you home because you may still feel light headed or dizzy when you leave.

The report will be sent directly to your referring doctor and depending on who your referring Dr is, your images can take anywhere from one to two weeks before they are available on our MMI Patient Portal.

If you have any concerns, please contact our nurse via email mmi.nurse@mqhealth.org.au, alternatively you can contact our main reception on (02) 9430 1100.