

Calcium Scoring

Calcium Scoring is evaluated by using Cardiac CT, which is performed by using a multi-slice CT (computed tomography) scanner. CT is an abbreviation for computed tomography, which is a valuable diagnostic medical exam that combines X-rays and computers. A CT scan gives the radiologist a non-surgical way to see inside your body. A Cardiac CT scan has to be even faster than a normal CT scanner because it has to have the ability to "freeze" the heart. The heart is an extremely rapid moving structure, so in order to produce images within the heart the scanner has to scan as fast as the heart beats or as close as possible. The Cardiac CT evaluates if there are any issues with the heart, including diagnosis of coronary artery disease. Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the leading cause of heart attacks.

What Are These Scans Looking For?

Calcium Scoring, also called Coronary Calcium Scan, is a test that can be done with Cardiac CT. This scan is used to evaluate the calcium build up within the coronary arteries and does not require any contrast agent. The results of this scan are given in a score. The higher the score, the more calcium build up within the arteries. Build up can cause stenosis (narrowing) and blockages, which may lead to coronary artery disease (CAD). CAD is the leading cause of heart attacks. These exams are not guaranteed to show soft plaque, so it is not 100%. Calcium Scores are a tool to simply assess the calcium, as an initial part of the total Cardiac CT examination.

Do I Need to Get a Calcium Score Scan?

Talking with your physician about your family history and other risk factors will clarify whether this test is for you. For assessment of your risk, click [here](#).

What Should I Expect?

A CT technologist will escort you into the CT scanning room, where you'll see a table and a large, doughnut-shaped device called a gantry. The technologist will have you lie down on the padded table, and make sure you're comfortable. You'll be asked to lie very still during the scan and may be asked to hold your breath for a short time to minimize any body movement.

During the scan you might hear a humming noise. You may notice the table moving while images are being taken at certain locations of your body. The technologist can monitor you during the entire exam through a window and will talk to you through an intercom.

The specific details of your examination will be explained fully by a CT technologist or your physician.