Patient Information
R02

NHS Golden Jubilee

Computerised Tomography (CT) coronary angiography scan

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About this leaflet

Your cardiologist has referred you to have a CT scan of the coronary arteries (vessels that supply blood to the heart muscle). The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what happens before, during and after the procedure. You will have been sent a letter with specific instructions about preparing for your scan.

What is a CT scan?

Computerised Tomography involves cross-sectional imaging using X-rays which are transmitted via a computer to a monitor. These images are stored for review by a Radiologist, a doctor who will interpret the scan.

The CT scanner is open at both ends and the area of your body being scanned will move through the scan area.

Before the scan

Prior to the scan, the radiographer will check your details and ask you some questions to ensure that the correct area of your body is being scanned. When you arrive in the department, your heart rate will be checked and you may be given medication to lower your heart rate – this can take up to one hour to take effect.

Eat a light breakfast or lunch before your scan, do not restrict fluids.You will be asked to undress and wear a hospital gown. You will be asked to remove your jewellery or body piercings if they are going to be in the scan field.

Heart monitor leads will be attached to your chest in order to monitor your heart rate during the procedure.

A small plastic cannula will be placed in a vein in your arm. This allows us to inject the contrast medium (x-ray dye), which is necessary to highlight the coronary arteries. The fluid is colourless and shows up white on the scans.

We will ask you questions about your medical history and we will explain what happens during the injection of contrast. Please bring a list of all medication you are taking with you.

During the scan

You will have to lie on a couch with your arms raised for the scan and keep still when the images are being taken. During the scan you will be asked to hold your breath whilst the images are acquired. We will practise the breath hold with you before the scan. We will explain what you can expect during the procedure but it may be helpful for you to practice holding your breath for up to **20 seconds** before you arrive for your scan.

The scan will take around 20 minutes to perform, although it will take longer to set up the scan and the monitoring equipment. Please allow **four hours** for this scan, this is to enable us to monitor your heart rate and allow any medication we give you to take effect before you are scanned.

After the scan

You may eat and drink normally after your scan. It is recommended that you drink plenty of fluids. If you have had an injection we recommend that you remain in the hospital for one hour after your scan. Results of your scan will be sent to the Cardiologist who requested them.

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reviewed for plain English

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