

64-slice Calcium CT Score

“If knowing more about your health gives you the motivation to make important changes—you might consider a non-invasive 64-slice calcium CT scan.”

– Dr. C. Patrick Green, cardiologist, Heart Center of the Rockies



The Imaging Center



Heart disease continues to be the number one cause of death among American men and women. And as with many other diseases, the earlier and more precise the detection, the better the chances for successful treatment.

Coronary artery disease, also known as atherosclerosis, occurs when the arteries carrying blood and oxygen to the heart become clogged with plaque. High blood pressure, high blood sugar, the effects of smoking and other factors damage the inner layer of the arteries. When the body tries to repair the damage, it forms a layer of plaque on the inside of the artery. This layer can slow the blood flow to the heart muscle and increase the chance of heart damage.

It's difficult to measure plaque without using an invasive procedure. However, the presence of calcium, which can be seen with a non-invasive calcium CT scan, is an indicator of how much or little plaque is present. If the calcium score is less than 10, there is almost no plaque. But, as the score increases, so can the risk.

New Technology

Newly available is the 64-slice calcium CT scan that allows a trained technician to build a 3-D image of the heart and vasculature without invasive catheterization. While the older 16- and 32-slice CT technology yielded some

information about blockages in coronary arteries, the improved 64-slice scans faster, overcoming the motion of the heart muscle and producing significantly clearer images of the heart and arteries.

Who should have this exam?

This is a screening exam that may be recommended by your doctor if you have risk factors for heart disease, but you have not yet experienced any clinical symptoms. Some patients choose to have the test on their own, or self-refer, in order to

discover any early-stage heart disease. The procedure is most often recommended for people with any two (or more) risk factors.

How to prepare for this exam

This exam does not require any advance preparation, fasting, or injections. Please continue to take your usual medications,

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Risk factors for coronary artery disease:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol, 240 mg/dl or higher
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- 20 lbs or more overweight
- Inactive lifestyle
- Family history of heart disease
- Men over 45 years old
- Women over 55 years old
- Stress

