

New Technology Identifies Heart Disease Earlier

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

64-slice CT (Computed Tomography, sometimes called a CAT scan) imaging is a new non-invasive tool for patients and doctors alike in the detection of cardiovascular disease. Poudre Valley Health System, in partnership with Heart Center of the Rockies and Harmony Imaging Center now offers this advanced 64-slice imaging technology.

The 64-slice cardiac CT scan allows a trained technician to build a 3-D image of the heart and vascular system. Because the 64-slice can scan much faster, the motion of the heart muscle is minimized and images are clearer than previous 16- and 32-slice technology. This test is an outpatient procedure and is quick and painless, taking only seconds for the actual scan. There are two types of cardiac CT scans.

64-Slice Calcium Score

A 64-slice cardiac calcium score is useful for lower risk patients, typically ages 40 – 70, who have an interest in determining their personal risk of future heart attack. An individual may be at risk because of their family history of coronary artery disease or because they have other heart disease risk factors such as diabetes, smoking, high blood pressure, or an inactive lifestyle. The scan will determine the presence of calcium in the heart arteries, an indicator of atherosclerotic plaque. The more plaque present, the greater the likelihood of arterial narrowing and heart attacks.

While a 64-slice calcium CT scan can be self-referred, working in tandem with a physician can ensure that appropriate medication or lifestyle changes are discussed. This test is considered a “screening test” by most insurance companies and is not usually covered.

64-Slice CT Angiogram

For patients who present symptoms, or have inconclusive stress test results, a physician might recommend a coronary CT Angiogram. Still considered non-invasive, this test requires an injection of an IV contrast agent to highlight the vessel. Compared to a traditional invasive angiogram that is an all-day affair, a CT Angiogram takes only about 30 minutes including prep time. Insurance coverage varies; please check with your insurance provider.

“The traditional angiogram is still the ‘gold standard’ procedure to determine how much disease is present,” says C. Patrick Green, cardiologist at Heart Center of the Rockies. “However, the 64-slice CT Angiogram is a good starting place to give us an early indication if the disease is present at all.”

For more information, or to schedule a CT Calcium Score, call Harmony Imaging Center at (970) 297-6202

Source: visit www.heartcenteroftherockies.com