Cardiac CT

Radiology Service

Information for patients

What is a Cardiac CT?
A Cardiac CT is a scan that looks at the blood vessels that supply your heart muscle, usually for any narrowing of the vessels and to assess how well your heart is pumping.

Why do I need a Cardiac CT?
Your doctor may order this test if you have had some chest pain, to see if there are any narrowings of your coronary (heart) arteries, or as a checkup if you have had heart bypass surgery in the past.

Risks of Cardiac CT:
- Low blood pressure and pulse, light headedness, dizziness or shortness of breath.
- Allergic reactions to the medications and x-ray dye used.

What to bring:
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.).

Preparation:
In order to obtain clear pictures your heart rate must be low. Sometimes you may require a medication called a beta blocker to lower it. If required, it can be taken by mouth or given through a cannula (small plastic tube) in a vein in your hand or arm. If you require medication you may need to come into hospital earlier and stay slightly longer after your scan for monitoring. Your doctor will discuss your individual requirements with you.

Eating/drinking:
You may eat and drink but avoid caffeinated drinks and a large meal before the scan.

Medications:
Inform staff at time of booking ALL medications you are taking as some medications need to be ceased 2 days before the scan.
Continue taking any other medication you are prescribed unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your scan.
On the day of your scan, please bring with you a list of all medications you are taking.
Please inform us if you’ve had a previous allergic reaction to x-ray dye.

Procedure:
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss your medical history with you and dress you in a patient gown. A cannula (small plastic tube) will be inserted into a vein in your hand or arm.

During the procedure, you will be lying on a bed in the CT room. Your heart rate, rhythm and blood pressure will be monitored.
To achieve the best scan results your heart rate should be just lower than 60 beats per minute. If your heart rate is higher than this you will be given medication to lower it.

You will be also be given a medication called glycercyl trinitrate (GTN) immediately before the scan which dilates the blood vessels.

**Post Procedure:**
After the scan you will return to the patient recovery bay for observation. You will remain in recovery for 30mins to 1 hour depending on the medication you may have had.

**Discharge:**
After your recovery period you will be able to go home if you have no other medical conditions or concerns that require further treatment.

If you were given medication to lower your heart rate, you will be able to go home once your heart rate has returned to a normal level.

You will be provided with an information sheet regarding discharge instructions upon completion of your procedure.

**Results:**
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor. Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

**Radiation Risk:**
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

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**References**
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

If you would like to provide feedback contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au