Information for Patients on Cardiac CT Scans

Welcome to Blackrock Clinic
Accredited by Joint Commission International
Cardiac CT Scans

A CT or CAT scan is a procedure that with the aid of a computer combines many x-ray images to produce cross sectional views of the body. These images are much more detailed than those produced by conventional x-ray for example a CT scan shows different types of tissue, internal body organs and blood vessels.

What is a Cardiac CT?

A Cardiac CT uses advanced CT Technology to visualize three-dimensional images of the heart. The scan can detect early signs of heart disease otherwise known as Coronary Artery Disease, well before a person experiences any symptoms. Detecting this information early can help doctors manage, stabilize and or eliminate the causes to help save lives.

There are two types of Cardiac CT Scans;

❖ A Calcium Score Scan
❖ A Cardiac CT Scan
What is Coronary Artery Disease?

Coronary Artery Disease is caused by atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) with cholesterol build up and calcification (calcium build up) of the coronary arteries.

The cardiac CT scan can detect the presence of calcium at a very early stage even before any significant blockage has developed and potentially years before a standard health screening or exercise ECG would detect the disease.
What does the procedure entail?

**A Calcium Score Scan**

This scan can detect very small deposits of calcium in your coronary arteries with great accuracy. The amount of calcium deposited in all the coronary arteries is added and a score is given.

For the procedure itself you simply lie on a padded table directly under the scanner with your arms above your head. ECG leads will be placed in appropriate positions on your chest. Two images will be taken initially and this is then followed by the main scan. The procedure takes about 10-15 minutes but expect to be in the department in total for approximately 30 minutes. The images are reported on by a Consultant Radiologist and the scan report will be sent directly to your referring Doctor.

**A Cardiac CT Scan**

This scan gives detailed images of the heart and coronary arteries using an intravenous contrast injection. It also includes a calcium score scan. When making the appointment you will be asked to arrive in the department one and a half hours prior to the scan time.

In preparation, you need to fast for 4 hours prior to the procedure, you also need to avoid drinking coffee or other stimulant drinks and to refrain from exercise before scanning.

On arrival to the CT department your heart rate will be checked. If your heart rate is above a certain level, you may be given a Betablocker (medication which slows the heart rate) on the instruction of the Consultant in the department.

Following administration of a Betablocker (if necessary) we will ask you to remain in the department for a minimum of one hour before scanning.
For the procedure you lie on the padded table under the scanner. A cannula is inserted into a vein in your arm for the intravenous contrast injection. ECG leads will be placed on your chest to monitor the heart rate.

The cardiac score will be performed initially followed by the contrast injection. Scanning then takes approximately 15 minutes.

After the scan you will remain in the department for up to one hour. It is advisable to be accompanied by a driver when returning home. You may eat and drink normally as soon as the procedure is complete.

Expect to be in the department for approximately two and a half hours in total from start to finish.

Following the Scan, a Consultant Radiologist and a Consultant Cardiologist will analyze the images produced and their report will go directly to your referring doctor.

*Our thanks to GE for the use of certain images.*
Appointments

You can make an appointment by contacting the department directly on:

Tel: 1800 300 200 or Fax: 01 206 4368

You will require a referral letter from your GP or your Consultant.

For more information why not log on to our website

www.blackrock-clinic.com
Peace of mind is an important component of healing.