Coronary Calcium Score Screening

What is a Coronary Calcium Score?
A coronary calcium score is a test for people at risk for heart disease who do not have symptoms. The test uses computed tomography (CT) to check for calcium buildup in the walls of the coronary arteries. The coronary arteries wrap around the heart and supply it with blood and oxygen. Calcium in these arteries is a sign of heart disease.

During the test, a CT scanner takes pictures of your heart in thin sections. The result is a score based on the amount of calcium seen on the pictures. The higher your calcium score, the higher your risk for coronary artery disease. The test takes about 15 minutes and emits low levels of radiation.

Who Should Get a Coronary Calcium Score Screening?
Your doctor may want you to have a coronary calcium score screening if you have risk factors for heart disease. This test may be most helpful for people who do not have symptoms but who are at medium risk for heart disease. Medium risk means that you have a 10 percent to 20 percent chance of having a heart attack in the next 10 years, based on your risk factors. Risk factors include age, weight, blood pressure, gender, family history, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes. Talk with your doctor about your risk for heart disease. This scan is not advised for routine screening for coronary artery disease.

What Do the Results Mean?
Your calcium score screening result is represented as a number, which can range from 0 to more than 400. The higher the score, the greater your chances of having coronary artery disease compared to people with similar risk factors. After you have the test, talk with your doctor about the results.

A coronary calcium score screening can give your doctor more information about your risk for heart disease, especially if you already have risk factors. If your score is high, for example, your doctor may prescribe medicines to lower these risks. A high score may also lead to other tests and treatment that could help you avoid a heart attack. If you are concerned as to whether you should undergo a coronary calcium score screening, speak with your physician.

References


For more information, call 469.814.3480 or visit TheHeartHospitalBaylor.com

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The Heart Hospital Baylor Denton
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