

## Patient information factsheet

# CT coronary angiogram

We have given you this factsheet because you have an appointment for a CT coronary angiogram. It explains what a CT coronary angiogram is, how to prepare for it and what to expect during the scan. Please make sure you read this information and follow the instructions carefully before your scan. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of your healthcare team, or use the contact number at the end of this factsheet.

### What is a CT coronary angiogram?

During a CT coronary angiogram, a CT (computerised tomography) scanner takes images of your heart. These images are cross-sectional (look like slices) and are used to produce 2D and 3D images of your heart and coronary arteries (the blood vessels that supply the heart with blood and oxygen). This allows us to see any narrowing or blockage of the arteries around your heart.

### Why do I need a CT coronary angiogram?

A CT coronary angiogram looks at the arteries around your heart. You may need a CT coronary angiogram if:

- you suffer with chest pain
- you are due to have surgery

### Preparing for your scan

When you receive your appointment letter, please contact us to let us know if:

- you have an allergy to iodine
- there is any possibility that you may be pregnant (we may not be able to do the CT scan)
- you take Viagra (Sildenafil)
- you have limited mobility and will need special assistance to get on and off the scanning table (for example, a hoist)
- you need an interpreter (family and friends are not allowed to translate or interpret during the scan)

Depending on the answers to the above, we may need to change what we do in the examination or organise another appointment time for you.

Please try to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment. Please let us know if you are unable to attend your appointment. If you require transport to your appointment, please contact us or your GP to arrange it for you.

All children attending the department must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times. Members of staff are not able to look after children for you.

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Please leave any valuables at home. University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property.

You may wish to bring your own dressing gown and reading material with you to the appointment.

## Medications

Please continue to take your medications as normal (unless your doctor has told you otherwise). Please bring a list of your current medication with you on the day of your scan.

If you have asthma and use an inhaler, please bring it with you on the day of your scan.

## Two hours before your scan

Please do not eat for two hours before your scan. You can drink fluids.

## One hour before your scan

You should **avoid** drinks containing caffeine, such as:

- tea
- coffee
- hot chocolate
- fizzy drinks
- energy drinks

You can drink water or flavoured water to keep you hydrated.

## When you arrive for the scan

When you arrive for the CT coronary angiogram, we will explain the test, go through a checklist of questions and answer any questions you may have.

We will then ask you to change into a hospital gown.

We will insert a cannula (a thin, flexible plastic tube used to give medication or fluids) into a vein in your arm. We will then ask you to lie down on the scanner table.

## During the scan

We will clean your skin and place small sticky patches (called electrodes) connected to leads on your chest. We may need to shave a small area of your chest so that we get good contact between you and the electrodes.

The electrodes are connected to a monitor that records the rhythm and electrical activity of your heart. If your heart rate is over 60 beats per minute, a doctor or specialist radiographer may give you a beta-blocker injection (medication to slow your heart rate) via the cannula in your arm. The medication will only slow your heart rate to a safe level and acts for a short time.

We may also ask you to put one or two small glyceryl trinitrate tablets under your tongue. These will dissolve. These tablets dilate (enlarge) your arteries and make it easier to see whether there are any blockages. You may feel a slight headache or become a little dizzy for a short while.

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We will then give you two infusions of x-ray contrast (fluid to enable us to see the arteries around your heart) through the cannula in your arm. The first infusion allows us to plan the scan, and the second allows us to take images of your heart.

You may:

- feel hot
- feel that you are passing urine
- have a metallic taste in your mouth

These are common side effects of the contrast we use during the scan. These side effects should pass quickly.

During the scan, we will ask you to hold your breath for no more than 15 seconds at a time. This helps us get clear images of your heart. We will practice this with you before the scan, so you know exactly what to do.

The scanner is not very noisy, and the procedure should not be painful. The staff can always see and hear you through a connecting window and intercom, so please let them know if you begin to feel unwell.

## After the scan

The procedure takes around 30 minutes, but please expect to be with us for up to an hour or so in total.

We will ask you to wait in the department for a short time after the scan. This is to make sure that you feel well. You can go home after we have removed the cannula.

You should drink plenty of fluids for the rest of the day. You can remove the gauze dressing from your arm after one hour.

## Risks of a CT coronary angiogram

As with every procedure, there are some risks associated with having a CT coronary angiogram.

### Radiation

There is some exposure to radiation during the procedure. However, the amount of radiation you will receive is kept to a minimum. The overall radiation risk has been assessed as low.

### Allergic reaction

Some people may have an allergic reaction to the CT contrast (Iomeprol). We will go through a safety checklist before the procedure to identify if you are at increased risk.

### Swelling

Very occasionally, the contrast can leak outside the vein. This can cause temporary swelling and discomfort in the arm. We will give you further instructions and advice to follow if this happens.

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## Results

The CT images that we take will be reviewed by a consultant radiologist (a doctor specialising in diagnosing conditions using medical images). We will discuss the report with you at your follow-up outpatient appointment.

## Alternatives to a CT coronary angiogram

The doctor who referred you for the CT coronary angiogram will talk to you about any alternatives to this procedure.

## Contact us

If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of your healthcare team who will be happy to explain further.

If you have any questions before the CT coronary angiogram, please telephone the radiology department.

## Radiology department

Telephone: **023 8120 4833** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm)

## Useful links

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan/)

[www.impactscan.org/patientguide.htm](http://www.impactscan.org/patientguide.htm)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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