

## Is there any risk to me from the radiation used in the scan?

The amount of radiation used to perform a CTCA scan is small and kept to an absolute minimum. We are exposed to natural background radiation all the time from the ground and the atmosphere and this test is equivalent to about four years' worth of natural background radiation. We believe that the benefits of having the scan outweigh the risks. Radiation can cause cell damage which may, after many years or decades, become cancerous. We estimate that by having this examination your natural lifetime risk of developing cancer may increase very slightly from 33% to 33.04%.

We aim to make sure that every patient fully understands the risks and benefits of the procedure. Please ask if you have any questions. Please also let us know if you are pregnant.

## What happens if I don't have the scan?

If you don't have this scan, your doctor will have less information to diagnose or assess your health problem. This will make it harder for us to give you the best treatment for your condition.

## How will I get my results?

We will send the results to the hospital consultant who referred you for the scan.

## Further information

If you have any other questions before you come for your scan, you can ask your family doctor, the doctor that has sent you for the test or the X-ray department. You can also find further information at the following website: [www.rcrac.uk/patients](http://www.rcrac.uk/patients)

[INSERT DIRECTIONS  
TO THE HOSPITAL AND SCANNING  
DEPARTMENT HERE]

# Example patient information

## Having a computed tomography coronary angiogram

This leaflet gives general information about a computed tomography coronary angiography (CTCA) scan. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a qualified healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.

## What is a CTCA scan?

A CT (computerised tomography) scan is a special X-ray test that allows us to take detailed images of the body. A CTCA scan takes pictures of your heart and coronary arteries. This allows us to see any narrowing or blockage of the arteries around your heart.

## How is a CT coronary angiography scan carried out?

Our radiographer will ask you to lie on a special bed. We will place sticky patches called electrodes on your chest so that the ECG can monitor your heart during the test. We can then trigger the scanner to take a picture at a certain point during your heartbeat. This gives us high-quality images of your heart. The bed moves through the scanner so we can take pictures of your heart and arteries.

We will give you an injection of X-ray contrast (sometimes called dye) so that we can see your heart and arteries clearly. The dye is usually safe but you should tell us if you have any allergies. The dye will pass through your system.

It can be difficult for us to get a clear picture if your heart is beating too quickly. We will check your heart rate when you arrive and if it is faster than the ideal rate, we may give you some medication to slow it down, probably a drug known as a beta-blocker. This may be in the form of a tablet or an injection. Please try to avoid driving or cycling to or from your appointment as the medication can make you drowsy. It is a good idea to ask someone to come with you to the appointment. The medication can take up to an hour to start working, but as soon as your heart rate is slower we will perform the scan. You will probably not notice any side-effects from this medication but it is important that you tell us if you suffer from asthma.

We may also give you another medicine in a spray form or in a tablet form under your tongue just before the scan. This is to open up the arteries in the heart as much as possible to make it easier to assess them on the scan. You might get a slight headache or feel a little dizzy from this.

When you breathe, it can cause the image to blur. To help us get a clear picture of your heart, we will ask you to hold your breath for no more than 15 seconds at some point during the scan. We will practise this with you before your scan and go through exactly what you should expect during the procedure.

## How long will the scan take?

The scan itself should only take around 15 minutes. Please remember that we have to prepare for the scan and may have to give you medication as described above. Please be prepared to stay for over an hour.

## How should I prepare for the scan?

You can eat as normal and should continue to take your medication as prescribed. Please bring a list of your current medication.

However, if you have diabetes and are taking metformin, you should contact the CT department in advance of your scan.

If you are asthmatic and use an inhaler, please bring it with you to your appointment.

You should be able to return to your normal daily routine after your scan and you can eat and drink as normal.

## What are the benefits of a CTCA scan?

A CTCA scan gives detailed pictures of your heart, which help us to make a diagnosis or assess any health problems. We can then suggest the best treatment for you. Although other tests provide information on how well your heart is functioning, only a CTCA scan gives us enough information about the structure of your heart.