

CT Coronary Angiography

Purpose of the examination:

CT Coronary Angiography is generally performed to evaluate the degree of narrowing or blockage of the heart vessels and is an alternative to more invasive catheter angiography. Other reasons your doctor may request this study are potentially dangerous congenital coronary abnormalities, or abnormal connections involving the coronary arteries or evaluation of bypass grafts. The study is usually ordered by cardiologists, cardiovascular surgeons or primary care physicians.

How to prepare:

Since we are imaging the moving heart, a slower heart rate below 60 beats per minute is desired. The primary physician will note your heart rate and blood pressure and might prescribe appropriate medication if needed to slow the heart rate, typically for 3 days prior to procedure. Energy drinks, caffeine products, tea, chocolates, and cigarettes should be avoided 12 hours prior to procedure since these can increase the heart rate. You will be fasting for 4 hours prior to the procedure. A breath hold during the study for approximately 10-15 seconds is desired for an optimum study. A family member or friend needs to accompany you to drive you back home since the medications might cause a drop in blood pressure or drowsiness.

Where to go:

CT Coronary Angiography is performed at The Kirklin Clinic of UAB Hospital within the third floor Radiology area as well as University Hospital 6th floor North Pavilion. Please check in with the Radiology desk upon arrival and they will assist you to the appropriate area.

What to expect:

Once escorted into the CT examination area, you will change into a gown in a private area where you may store personal belongings. Our nurse will briefly interview you and start with setting up heart rate, blood pressure & EKG monitors, and insert an intravenous needle in the arm for the contrast injection. You will be observed here for a few minutes for a slow & steady heart rate. Once you enter the CT scan room, the radiologist is called for monitoring the study. Relaxing and taking slow, deep breaths are helpful in slowing the heart rate. At this point, you might receive medicine to slow your heart further rate if needed as well as medicine to dilate the arteries to the heart for better visualization. The examination only takes a few minutes. You will be scanned while lying on your back. Injection of contrast medicine through the IV line may cause a feeling of warmth and flushing. After completing the scan, depending on the medicines received, the nurse will observe you in the holding area for 15-45 minutes. After confirming your stable heart parameters, you will return to your dressing room where you will change into your clothes.

After the examination:

The examination will be studied by one of our trained cardiac radiologists who will then provide a report to your referring primary care doctor or cardiologist. The results and any recommendations will be communicated to the physician.

For more information:

For scheduling queries, call UAB Cardiac Radiology scheduling specialist Tracie Bishop (205-975-7700) or Ernestine Hendrix (205-996-9442).

Thank you for choosing UAB Radiology!