

# TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



## Coronary CT Angiogram

### What is a Coronary CT Angiogram?

Your doctor has suggested you have a CT angiogram as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. CTA stands for coronary computed tomography angiogram. A CT angiogram takes pictures of the heart. The pictures are more detailed than a typical x-ray. During a CT angiogram pictures are taken of cross sections or slices of the heart. When contrast is used during a CT scan pictures of the heart are highlighted even more.

Ct scans can help determine a diagnosis early. Your doctor will use this information to determine the best treatment for you.

### How do you get ready for the test?

- ✓ You need to have a recent EKG and bloodwork (creatinine level). Talk with you doctor about this before the test.
- ✓ Talk with your doctor before the test if you have a history of reactions to contrast in the past.
- ✓ Avoid having any barium studies done 2 to 3 days before the CT scan.
- ✓ **Avoid caffeine sources for 6 hours prior to this test.** This includes coffee, decaffeinated coffee, tea, decaffeinated tea, herbal tea, soda pop and chocolate.
- ✓ **Avoid nicotine sources for 6 hours prior to this test.**
- ✓ **Drink two 8 ounce glasses of water 1 hour before the test.**
- ✓ You may be asked to take certain medications before the test. Your will be contacted before your test by the Cardiac CTA Nurse to discuss the test, answer questions and give you instructions about which medicine to hold and for how long.
- ✓ Bring your medicine with you to the test. After the test you will be instructed to take any medicine that were held.

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- ✓ Please arrive 45 minutes before the test is scheduled.

### What is done during the test?

The nurse will explain the CT angiogram to you before you start. Ask questions if you don't understand. Before the test you will need to remove all clothing and jewelry from the waist up. You will be given a hospital gown to wear.

The nurse will start an IV in the elbow area. You will feel a prick when the IV is started. You will be monitored closely during the procedure. You will have EKG leads placed on your chest to monitor your heart. You will have a blood pressure cuff to monitor your blood pressure. You may receive oxygen during the CT scan with a nasal cannula to help you hold your breath at times.

The IV will be used to give you the contrast media. Many people feel a warm "flush" as the contrast media is injected. This is normal and passes quickly. You may also be given IV medication to slow your heart rate. In addition, you will be given a nitroglycerine pill under your tongue.

The CT scan will be done at certain times while the contrast media and medications are given. The CT scan does not hurt. The CT scanner includes a table you will lie on and a doughnut shaped ring that will move over the table. You will lie still on the table. The technologist will give you instructions during the test. You will also be asked to hold your breath for 10 to 12 seconds several times. While you hold your breath the images are taken. It is important to lie still while the images are taken.

### What should you do after the test?

You will be monitored by a nurse for 30 to 60 minutes after the procedure. Be sure to eat and drink extra fluids for several hours after the test.

### How long will the test take?

A CT Angiogram takes about 2 ½ - 3 hours. This includes 1 hour for the test and 1 ½ hours – 2 hours for preparation and recovery.

### How do you get to your test?

You will be directed where to go when you check-in. If you have any questions you can contact 303-398-1611.

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