

## **Cardiac CT Angiogram**

Your doctor has scheduled you for a Cardiac or Coronary CT Angiogram (CCTA). CCTA visualizes the blood flow in the coronary arteries as well as examines the walls of the coronary arteries for the presence of plaque. This information can assist your physician in determining your risk of heart disease and develop a plan of care with you.

**PREPARATION:** Prepare for your test as instructed by your physician or nursing staff. You will be instructed to remain caffeine free for at least 12 hrs. You are also instructed not to eat or drink anything for 6 hrs prior to your test. You may wear loose comfortable clothing or will be given a hospital gown. Visitation may be limited because we want you to rest and relax. You may be given Valium to help you with any anxiety you may experience. Because the images we obtain of your heart are taken between heart beats, you may also be given medication to lower your heart rate such as Metoprolol. Your nurse will place an IV in the inside bend of your elbow. Some blood work may need to be drawn based on your medical history.

**BEFORE THE TEST:** For your safety, you will be asked a number of questions by the technologist and/or nurse. Among the things you will be asked are:

- What kind of symptoms are you having?
- Medical history?
- Any previous surgeries?
- Whether or not you are (or may be) pregnant?
- Current medication use? Allergies?
- Height? Weight?
- Family medical history?

**THE TEST:** You will be brought to the CT department. You will be placed on a heart monitor. We will assist you in becoming comfortable lying on your back with your arms above your head. During the imaging your body will move in and out of the scanner, but your head and arms will remain out in the open. Additional, medications may be given to you through your IV to lower your heart rate. Unless contraindicated, you will be given Nitroglycerin tablet to dissolve under your tongue. This medication dilates the blood vessels and makes interpreting your test easier. A combination of imaging scans will be completed. The CT scanner will make a loud noise similar to the sound of jet engine on an airplane. This is the normal function of the machine. During the test you will be given breathing instructions. It is very important that you follow the instructions and hold your breath until instructed to breathe. This decreases movement on the images. You will also be given

**contrast medication in the IV. This contrast may give you a strong warm flushed feeling and may make you feel like urinating. This feeling will subside after the injection.**

**AFTER YOUR TEST:** You will be returned to your room. If you develop a headache from the Nitroglycerin, please notify your nurse so they may assist you. You may also feel tired until your heart rate returns to normal. If you are being discharged from the hospital on the same day of the test, you may be instructed not to drive, make any legal decisions, or drink any alcohol for the remainder of the day. Diabetic patients are instructed to hold certain medications for 48 hours after the test.

**RESULTS:** The radiologist and/or cardiologist will study your images in great detail after you have left the department, and will dictate a report which will be transcribed for your ordering physician to review and discuss with you. Your technologist is unable to give you any report at the time of testing.

Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible during your examination. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the imaging staff at 364-2429.