



Cardiac Calcium CT Scan (Coronary Artery Calcium Scan)

What is a Cardiac Calcium CT Scan?

A cardiac calcium CT scan (also called a coronary artery calcium or CAC scan) is a quick, noninvasive CT scan that looks for calcium buildup in the coronary arteries—the arteries that supply blood to the heart. Calcium in these arteries is a marker of atherosclerosis (plaque buildup) and helps assess future risk for heart disease.

Why is this test helpful?

This scan helps identify hidden heart disease before symptoms occur and can:

- Refine cardiovascular risk beyond standard cholesterol labs
- Help guide decisions about lifestyle changes or medications (such as statins)
- Provide reassurance when risk is low
- Motivate prevention when risk is higher

It is especially helpful for people who fall into a borderline or intermediate risk category based on traditional risk calculators.

Who may benefit from a CAC scan?

You may consider this test if you:

- Are between ages 40–75
- Have a family history of early heart disease
- Have risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, insulin resistance, diabetes, or smoking history
- Have chronic inflammation or autoimmune conditions
- Want a more personalized assessment of heart disease risk

This test is not typically recommended for people with known coronary artery disease or those at very low risk.

What to expect during the scan

- Takes about 5–10 minutes
- No needles, contrast, or IV required
- You lie on a table and hold your breath briefly while images are taken
- Radiation exposure is low (similar to a mammogram)

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WWW.WELLKCKS.ORG

What does the score mean?

The scan produces a calcium score:

- 0 – No detectable plaque; very low short-term risk
- 1–99 – Mild plaque; low to moderate risk
- 100–399 – Moderate plaque; increased risk
- 400+ – Extensive plaque; higher risk of heart events

Higher scores reflect more plaque and higher cardiovascular risk.

What the test does *not* show

- It does not show soft (non-calcified) plaque
- It does not diagnose blockages or predict exact timing of heart attacks
- It is one tool—results should be interpreted alongside labs, symptoms, and overall risk factors

How results are used

Results may help guide:

- Lifestyle recommendations (nutrition, exercise, sleep, stress management)
- Decisions around cholesterol-lowering or blood pressure medications
- Further testing or cardiology referral when appropriate

We typically have our patients complete this test at Advent Health (Shawnee Mission or Lenexa) or any University of Kansas Health System radiology location. You will need to let us know which location to send your order to.

This test is not covered by insurance. It is cash pay only and around \$45.

Advent Health Scheduling -

- Call 913-676-2505
- Schedule online: adventhealth.com/imaging/adventhealth-imaging-kansas-city/schedule-appointment

University of Kansas Health System Scheduling -

- Call 913-588-6804
- Request an appointment online: kansashealthsystem.com/request-appointment