



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.

You may benefit from this test if you:

- Are between ages 40–75
- Have a family history of early heart disease
- Have risk factors such as high cholesterol or 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.

Why is this test helpful?

- It 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
- 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.

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)

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; high 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

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

You can complete this test at an Advent Health or University of Kansas Health System Location

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

Advent Health Scheduling –

- Call 913-676-2505 or Schedule Online: [HERE](#)

University of Kansas Health System Scheduling –

- Call 913-588-6804 or Schedule Online: [HERE](#)