CT coronary angiography
Information for patients

What is CT angiography

A CT (computerised tomography) scan is a special X-ray examination that produces detailed images of the body.

CT scan allows us to obtain very detailed pictures of your heart. These images help us to assess any health problems and to give you the best treatment.

Are there any risks?

Like all X-ray machines, a CT scanner uses x-ray technology to produce the images (pictures). If your doctor has asked for a scan they will have decided that the benefit of having the information that the scan gives is great than the risk of the small dose of radiation.

In traditional non-CT angiography a catheter (thin tube) would be inserted into an artery in your leg and then positioned close to your heart. This is not needed for the CT technique, which reduces the risk of complications.

Pregnancy
If you are, or think that you may be, pregnant please call us on 01737 231 607 (Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 4pm) and ask to speak to a radiographer. This is because X-rays are believed to relatively more harmful to the unborn child, especially in the earlier stages of pregnancy.

Is there any preparation?

You must not eat for four hours before your scan but should make sure that you drink plenty of water over this time.

You should continue to take any medication you have been prescribed.
Please also avoid drinking tea, coffee or any fizzy drinks with caffeine in them on the day of your scan as this can speed up your heart rate.

If you have diabetes and are taking a medicine called metformin you must contact the CT department in advance of your scan. Ring the number on the back of this leaflet and speak to a member of the CT staff, who will be able to advise you.

If you are asthmatic and use an inhaler please bring it with you to your appointment.

Please follow carefully any other preparation instructions given in your appointment letter.

What does it involve?

You will be asked to change into a gown. Our radiographer will ask you to lie in the CT scanner couch and monitoring leads will be placed on your chest. This allows us to trigger the scanner at a certain point of your heartbeat. The bed moves through the scanner and pictures of your heart and arteries are taken. At some points we will ask you to hold your breath for up to 15 seconds. We will practice this with you before we start.

So that we can see your heart and arteries clearly, we will give you an injection of contrast (X-ray ‘dye’) into a vein in your arm. This travels through your veins to your heart and ‘highlights’ your heart as we scan.

If your heart is beating very quickly it can be difficult for us to get a clear picture. We will check your heart rate when you arrive and, if required, we may give you medication to slow it down. This is usually a tablet but may also be an injection.

Once your heart rate slows – the medication can take an hour to work – we will scan you.

You should not drive or cycle to or from your appointment as this medication can make you drowsy. It is a good idea to ask someone to drive you to your appointment and to take you home afterwards.

How long will it take?

You should allow about two hours for the preparation, scanning and recovery. You may bring reading material or something to keep you relaxed while you are waiting. The actual scan should only take about 15 minutes.

When do I find out the results?

Your scan will be reviewed and reported by an appropriate specialist. This report will be sent to the person who asked for your examination and they will discuss it with you at your next appointment.
How to find us

The CT suite is in the diagnostic imaging department (X-ray) on the ground floor of East Surrey Hospital, closest to the Main Entrance. Once in diagnostic imaging, follow the signs to the CT/MRI reception.

Further information

If you need to cancel, change your appointment or have any concerns/queries about your examination, please contact the CT department on: 01737 768511 x1442 or x1444 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Directions, parking and travel information for East Surrey Hospital and Crawley Hospital is available on our website at www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/finding-us/

Contact us

Diagnostic imaging
East Surrey Hospital
Redhill Surrey RH1 5RH
Tel: 01737 231 607
www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 01737 231 958
Email: pals@sash.nhs.uk
Write to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

You can also ask a member of staff to contact PALS on your behalf.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats, including in larger text. Contact 01737 231 958 for help.

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