

# Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring

## Patient Education

### **Heart Disease: Are You at Risk?**

- Do you have a family history of heart disease?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Do you have diabetes?
- Do you smoke, or are you exposed to secondhand smoke?
- Do you have an inactive lifestyle?
- Are you overweight?
- Do you have high cholesterol?
- Are you between 30 and 70 years of age?

If you answered YES to two or more questions, Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring may be beneficial for you.

However, if you have already been diagnosed with coronary heart disease or have had coronary bypass surgery or a coronary stent, the scan will be of limited benefit for you, and should be discussed with your physician.

You should not have this scan if you are pregnant due to radiation exposure.

### **What is Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring?**

Coronary artery calcium scoring is a test that helps assess your risk of having a heart attack. Heart attacks may be prevented if plaque in the arteries, also called atherosclerosis, is diagnosed and treated early.

Using advanced imaging, we can determine the amount of calcium build-up in your coronary arteries, which signals atherosclerotic plaque. If left untreated, this plaque can lead to serious coronary blockages or a heart attack.

### **How is the Procedure Performed?**

The test is performed on a Computed Tomography, or CT, machine, which takes a series of x-rays of your heart.

The technologist will need to place electrocardiogram leads on your chest so the CT scanner can precisely measure the beating of your heart. This enables the scanner to take dozens of x-rays during those fractions of a second between heartbeats when your heart is still.

The entire procedure takes about 30 minutes.

### **What is a Coronary Artery Calcium Score?**

The amount of calcium deposited in all your coronary arteries is added up and a “score” is given.

Because the amount of calcium in the coronary arteries varies considerably with age and gender, the calcium score is presented as percentile, comparing you to men and women of your age.

### **How Do I Schedule an Appointment?**

Get a written order from your doctor or schedule your Coronary Artery Calcium scan by calling Aspirus Riverview Hospital’s Imaging Services Department at 715.421.7430.

You can request the scan without a physician order; however, we encourage you to speak with your physician prior to getting the scan.

**Payment**

Most health plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, do not pay for this scan. You might, however, want to check with your insurance company to determine if the scan is covered under your preventive benefit.

**More Information**

For more information about the Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring, please call Aspirus Riverview Hospital's Imaging Services Department at 715.421.7430 or visit [aspirus.org](http://aspirus.org)

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