

## Heart CT Calcium Score Scan Interpretation

- A negative scan shows no calcification within the coronary arteries. Although it does not exclude the presence of “soft” noncalcified plaque.
- A positive scan means that CAD may be present.
- The results of the exam should be discussed with your physician.

Calcium Score	Presence of CAD	Risk/Recommended Action
0	No identifiable plaque	Low risk of clinical CAD; review guidelines for prevention
1-10	Minimal plaque	Low risk of clinical CAD; review guidelines for prevention
11-100	Mild plaque	Low to Moderate risk of clinical CAD; risk factor modification needed
101-400	Moderate plaque	Moderate risk of clinical CAD; risk factor modification and clinical follow up needed
Over 400	Extensive plaque	High risk of clinical CAD; aggressive risk factor modification and clinical follow-up needed. May require further testing.

### Anyone with one of the following conditions should not have a Heart CT Calcium Score Scan:

- Atrial Fibrillation
- History of Coronary Bypass Graft(s) or CABG
- History of Coronary Stent(s)
- Patient weight above table weight limit of 450 lbs.
- Pregnancy



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## Heart CT Calcium Score Scan at Lowell General Hospital

## Heart Computed Tomography (CT) Calcium Score Scan

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in this country. Also referred to as Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), heart disease occurs when the lining of the arteries that supply blood to the heart become hardened, stiffened and swollen with plaque. Plaque is a build-up of fat and other substances, including calcium, which can, over time, narrow the arteries or even close off blood flow to the heart. The result may be painful angina in the chest or a heart attack.

State-of-the-art computerized tomography (CT) can be used to detect calcium deposits found in plaque in the coronary arteries. A Heart CT Calcium Score Scan uses a relatively low radiation dose and is a non-invasive exam. The purpose of heart CT calcium scoring is to determine if CAD is present and to what extent, even if there are no symptoms. Calcium scoring is used to estimate the amount of calcium in the coronary arteries. More coronary calcium suggests a greater likelihood of significant narrowing in the coronary arteries and a higher risk of future cardiovascular events. It is a screening study that may be recommended by a physician for patients with risk factors for CAD, even with no clinical symptoms.

### Major risk factors for CAD are:

- abnormally high blood cholesterol levels
- male over 45 years of age, female over 55 years of age
- family history of heart disease
- past or present cigarette smoker
- being physically inactive
- high blood pressure
- being overweight
- diabetes



## How to prepare for the test

- **Schedule your test by calling 978-937-6023**
- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled test.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks and food (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate) 12-hours prior to the test.
- Avoid energy drinks, diet pills or decongestants 24 hours prior to the test.
- No nicotine 12-hours prior to the test.
- Avoid stimulants and medications contraindicated with nitrates (Viagra, Cialis, etc.) 48-hours prior to the test.
- CT scanners use x-rays. The test is not recommended if you are pregnant.

## What to expect during the test

- You will change into a hospital gown.
- The technologist will have you lie on the examination table.
- Electrodes (sticky patches) will be attached to your chest and to an electrocardiograph (ECG) machine that records the electrical activity of the heart. Men may expect to have their chest partially shaved to help electrodes stick.
- The high-speed CT scan captures multiple images, synchronized with your heart beat. A high heart rate may interfere with the test. If your heart rate is over 80 beats per minute, the exam may need to be rescheduled. During the scan, you will feel the table move inside a donut-shaped scanner.
- You will be asked to hold your breath for a period of 10-15 seconds while images are recorded. Breathing instructions are important to follow.
- The entire procedure including the actual CT scanning is usually completed within 30 minutes.
- A physician will analyze the images and a report will be sent to you within a few days.

### Special Introductory Offer – \$100

No physician referral required. Not covered by insurance.  
Patients are responsible for all costs at time of testing.  
Call 978-937-6023 to schedule your appointment.