Ask your doctor for a referral to Charlotte Radiology

Typically your referring physician will schedule an appointment for you. If you have been asked to schedule the appointment yourself, please have your physician's order and any pre-authorization information required by your insurance or health plan provider in hand, and call:

Carolinas Imaging Services (Outpatient Centers)
704.442.4390

Carolinas HealthCare System Facilities
704.512.2060

Appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday. In order to allow time for patient registration, we ask that you arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time.

For more information
If you have questions about any of our procedures or for directions, please visit our comprehensive website:

www.charlotteradiology.com

May we also suggest:

www.radiologyinfo.org
Advances in Cardiac CT. Offered by the area’s imaging experts.

58 million Americans have one or more forms of cardiovascular disease, making coronary artery disease (CAD) the number one killer of men and women in the United States. More Americans die of heart disease than all types of cancer combined.

CAD is most commonly produced by atherosclerosis (plaque deposits in the wall of the coronary arteries causing a narrowing of the arteries). Until recently there were no non-invasive studies that could directly evaluate the coronary arteries for the presence of atherosclerotic disease.

Recent advances in multi-detector CT technology now provide detailed three-dimensional images of the beating heart within the time frame of a single breath-hold. One of the most promising applications for these new tools is the realm of coronary imaging. At Charlotte Radiology, we are currently offering two exams to study the coronary arteries, Calcium Scoring and Coronary CT Angiography (CCTA).

Calcium Scoring

The Calcium Scoring exam is used as a screening tool in the evaluation of coronary artery disease. Calcium Scoring quantifies the total load of calcified (hardened) plaque in the coronary arteries based upon the volume and density of calcified plaque. It then compares that score to a large reference population matched to the patient’s age and sex. This exam can be used as a valuable tool in conjunction with other clinical risk factors such as family history, cholesterol level, lipid profile, etc. to help your physician determine how best to manage patients with coronary artery disease. However, it is not intended to replace your usual routine doctor’s evaluations.

Who needs a Calcium Scoring Exam?

For individuals at high risk for developing heart disease, including:

- age—men 40 or older, women 50 or older
- high cholesterol
- history of smoking
- high blood pressure
- family history of heart disease
- high stress levels
- sedentary lifestyle
- diabetes

If one or more of these factors apply to you, we encourage you to talk with your doctor about considering this procedure. Patients who have had previous cardiovascular treatment or surgery, including coronary stenting, coronary bypass surgery, pacemaker placement, or valve replacement are not candidates for this screening procedure.

Before and After the Procedure

The Calcium Scoring scan takes ten minutes. It does not involve any injections or medications. You will be asked to complete a brief risk factor questionnaire. You will then lie down on the table fully dressed while the technologist places EKG leads on your chest. While the scan is being performed you will hold your breath for a brief period in order to have still pictures. A radiologist from Charlotte Radiology who is subspecialized in body and cardiovascular imaging will then study the scan and send a report and your cardiac score to your physician. With this information, your doctor can recommend the appropriate treatment. This may include diet and lifestyle changes, medication and/or further testing.

Since Calcium Scoring is considered a screening test for asymptomatic patients, most insurance companies do not reimburse for its cost. Some insurance plans may cover this procedure with a doctor’s referral and prior authorization. However, it’s always best to check your individual plan coverage first. Please call for pricing.

Coronary CT Angiography

Coronary CT Angiography (CCTA) is a way of examining the small arteries that feed the heart muscle. It uses a computed tomography (CT) scanner to visualize blood flow in the coronary arteries and computer software to manipulate the data into 3-dimensional (3D) images. CCTA is a noninvasive way to examine the walls of the coronary arteries, looking for hard and soft plaque. This information can help your doctor determine your risk of a heart attack.

Who needs a CCTA exam?

For patients with suspected coronary artery disease, a CCTA can help with the management of the disease. Patients who would benefit from this procedure include those with an intermediate to high-risk profile with no typical coronary symptoms, patients who have had inconclusive results from a stress test, and patients with unusual symptoms for CAD, but low to intermediate risk profiles. Please talk with your doctor to assess your risks.

Preparing for CCTA

- Do not drink or eat anything during the four hours preceding your appointment.
- Do not consume anything containing caffeine or nicotine starting at midnight on the day of exam.
- You will be given or prescribed 100 mg of a medication to lower your heart rate, which you will take orally 3 hours prior to your procedure.
- You will also take one 0.4 mg tablet of sublingual nitroglycerin just prior to the exam.

During and After the Procedure

The Calcium Scoring study, a non-contrast procedure, is typically performed as the pre-contrast portion of the Coronary CTA exam for no additional charge. Once the calcium score is obtained, you will be given 80-120 cc of IV contrast. Following the 15-minute CT exam, you should expect to stay in our office an additional 15-30 minutes for observation.

Once your scan is completed, your images will be reviewed and interpreted. Your physician will receive a dictated report discussing the findings, including your cardiac score. With this information, your doctor can recommend the appropriate treatment. This may include diet and lifestyle changes, medication and/or further testing.