



Stay Ahead of Heart Disease: Guide to CT Calcium Scoring and Cardiovascular Health

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is New Zealand's number 1 killer with one Kiwi dying every 90 minutes. Frighteningly, in recent years the number of people dying or suffering disability from CVD globally has been increasing. This is in part due to the increasing prevalence of 'lifestyle diseases' such as obesity and diabetes. With 1 in 21 adult New Zealanders being affected by CVD*, someone you know – or maybe even yourself – has been touched by CVD.

What is a CT Calcium Score?

A CT Calcium Score is a specialised CT technique that uses very high-speed, high-resolution images to detect calcium on coronary arteries. No intravenous dye or other preparation is needed, and the test generally takes less than 15 minutes. The presence of calcium reflects 'Coronary Artery Disease' (CAD), and the CT can detect it before symptoms (like heart attacks) occur. The amount of calcium is given as a score, which determines an individual's risk of CAD. Early detection allows time to modify risk factors. CT is considered to be very safe and painless.

*<https://www.hri.org.nz/health/learn/cardiovascular-disease/cardiovascular-disease-impacts-and-risks>

Those most likely to benefit from this procedure are:

> Asymptomatic Men >45 years

(35 for Māori, Pacific and people from Indian subcontinent)

> Asymptomatic Women >55 years

(45 for Māori, Pacific and people from Indian subcontinent)

> Risk Factors:

- High total cholesterol and low 'good' cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Smoking cigarettes
- Diabetes mellitus

Extra risk is given to people with a strong family history of heart disease, Māori, Pacific, or Indian subcontinent people, and those with diabetes, kidney problems, and those who are overweight.

Patients with cardiovascular symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath with exertion, palpitations, or other symptoms related to heart problems should have a full cardiology assessment and NOT just a calcium score test.

Take Control of Your Heart Health Today

If you fall into any of the risk categories mentioned, or if you have concerns about your heart health, speak to your doctor about getting a CT Calcium Score test. Early detection can save lives. Schedule your appointment today and take the first step towards a healthier heart.



Speak to your GP about a referral

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