

Simple Screening Can Detect Heart Disease

Washington Radiology's Cardiac Calcium Scoring Test is a strong predictor of heart disease

FAIRFAX, Va. (Feb. 16, 2018) – The three leading indicators for heart disease are high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking. However, 53 percent of Americans don't qualify as being "at risk" according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). While no one is immune from heart disease, there are ways to reduce risk, and just as important, ways to detect early heart disease when no symptoms are present.

A good predictor of heart disease risk is [Washington Radiology's calcium scoring test](#). This scan is a noninvasive and painless screening that can detect heart disease at an early stage, years before the presence of disease becomes apparent. Early diagnosis is important, because it allows for lifestyle changes and pharmaceutical interventions that can help prevent further progression of the disease.

Former President Barack Obama and President Trump have both had a cardiac scoring exam as part of their annual physical exam. The Physician to the President, Dr. Ronny Jackson, revealed in January that the calcium scoring exam for Donald Trump was part of a series of heart wellness checkups including a stress test.

"Our patients know that calcium is good for building strong bones, but many are surprised that calcium is also a key indicator for heart health," said Dr. Alex Kladakis, a radiologist at Washington Radiology who specializes in CT. "Calcium is a component of plaque. Plaque is the substance we find in narrowed or blocked coronary arteries. When an artery is restricted or blocked, oxygen cannot get to the heart, which leads to a heart attack."



Cardiac Calcium Scoring Test image courtesy of Phillips

How Calcium Scoring Works

A cardiac calcium scoring CT is a quick screening study recommended for middle-age and older adults who are asymptomatic but may have lifestyle factors or a family history that place them at higher risk for heart disease.

The CT scan is used by the radiologist to view inside a patient's coronary arteries for possible calcifications. Doctors refer to the study findings as the "calcium score." This score gives the ordering physician an idea of the amount of calcification or plaque in the patient's arteries that has not yet caused symptoms. The calcium score can also predict a patient's future risk of heart attack – the higher the score, the more likely a heart attack is to occur.

Calcium scoring scans are fast, painless and accurate. It typically takes only 10 minutes to perform. Preparation is minimal; however, patients are asked to avoid caffeinated beverages 24-hours before their appointment.

A physician's order is needed for a calcium scoring exam. Some health plans cover this study based on the patient's medical history and other risk factors. Patients are encouraged to check with their insurance plan before scheduling. Washington Radiology recognizes the importance of maintaining heart health through regular screenings like calcium scoring and will file a patient's claim to their insurance plan. The maximum out-of-pocket cost a patient at Washington Radiology will pay for this exam is \$125.

A national leader in delivering exceptional care, Washington Radiology believes optimal health begins with regular wellness screenings. Their commitment to providing an exceptional experience and exceptionally accurate results is the cornerstone for their peace of mind promise. Washington Radiology is redefining the imaging standard with state-of-the-art imaging technologies, a commitment to clinical excellence, dedicated specialists in specific modalities and a culture of patient service that is warm, caring and compassionate to everyone they serve.

Washington Radiology's cardiac calcium scoring CT is available at their Washington D.C., Chevy Chase, Maryland, and Sterling, Virginia, locations. For more information, please call 703-641-9133 or visit <https://www.washingtonradiology.com/services/ct-services/calcium-scoring/>.

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About Washington Radiology

A provider of comprehensive diagnostic screening services since 1948, Washington Radiology serves the metro D.C. area through seven screening centers, 28 board-certified physicians, and more than 200 employee team members. Washington Radiology is a part of the [Solis Mammography](#) network, headquartered in Addison, Texas. Solis Mammography operates 45 centers across six major markets – North Texas; Houston; Phoenix; Columbus, Ohio; and Greensboro, North Carolina, in addition to D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Serving more than 700,000 patients last year, both Solis Mammography and Washington Radiology offer dedicated experts in breast screening and diagnostic mammography (2-D and 3-D), breast ultrasound, stereotactic biopsy and ultrasound-guided biopsy. In addition, Washington Radiology offers a full range of diagnostic services including general ultrasound, general biopsy, X-ray, MRI and CT screening. For more information on Washington Radiology, go to: www.WashingtonRadiology.com and [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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