



News Release

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### **Are you at an increased risk of a cardiac event**

For Immediate Release

**(COLUMBUS, Neb.)** – Columbus Community Hospital offers cardiac calcium scoring, a tool that can be useful in estimating a patient’s risk of a future cardiac event. The procedure is also known as coronary artery calcium (CAC) scoring, a heart scan or a calcium score. It checks for plaque or calcium buildup in the coronary arteries, which could cause heart disease or a heart attack.

“Calcium scoring is a valuable tool because it helps alert us to the underlying presence of coronary artery disease in patients who are at risk,” said Nikunj Kumar Patel, a cardiologist with Columbus Cardiology Clinic. “This information allows for early detection and aggressive preventive measures against possible coronary artery disease and its complications.”

The coronary arteries supply the oxygen-rich blood in a person's heart. Plaque, made of fat, calcium or other substances, can build up and narrow or close the coronary arteries. The calcium scoring scan detects this buildup.

During the scan, a patient lies on their back on the computerized tomography (CT) table. Radiology technicians place electrocardiogram (EKG) electrodes on the patient’s chest to monitor their heart rate, and the CT table moves in tiny increments every few seconds while taking pictures. The patient will be asked to hold perfectly still and may need to hold their breath briefly.

“The scan is a fast and easy test that provides an abundance of helpful information for patients who are at risk of a coronary event,” said Matthew Pieper, a radiologist with CCH’s North Central Radiology.

When the scan is complete, radiology technicians process the images, and a radiologist interprets the results before reporting them to the patient’s referring doctor.

The information provided during the 15-second scan helps doctors advise patients about their risk for having a heart attack, and helps the patients make decisions regarding heart protection medication and exercise regimens.

#### **Who should have cardiac calcium scoring?**

Coronary calcium scoring may be appropriate for men ages 35 to 70, or women ages 40 to 70 who have one or more of the following major risk factors for developing heart disease:

- Total cholesterol over 200.
- LDL “bad” cholesterol over 130.



- HDL “good” cholesterol below 40.
- High blood pressure.
- Diabetes.
- Smoking.
- History of blocked arteries in the legs or pain in the calves when walking.
- History of stroke.
- Family history of premature coronary disease (parent, grandparent or sibling with a heart attack or other coronary event before age 65).

You must have a doctor referral to complete cardiac calcium scoring. The cost of the exam is \$150, payable to the hospital. You will need to pay for the procedure yourself, as most insurance plans will not cover the cost of this test.

Talk to your primary care provider or cardiologist for more information on cardiac calcium scoring. For details on CCH’s North Central Radiology or any other services offered at the hospital, please visit [columbushosp.org](http://columbushosp.org).

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