

CT Cardiac (SEAL) Examinations

What is a Cardiac CT scan?

A Cardiac CT Scan is a specialised type of X-ray test to take images of your heart. CT stands for computed tomography.

Why do I need this test?

Based on your symptoms, your Doctor has decided to investigate your heart. The cardiac CT scan will look at your heart, and in particular at the blood vessels which supply blood to your heart (coronary arteries). The scan will evaluate whether there is any sign of abnormality of these blood vessels, which can be associated with heart disease.

How to prepare for your scan?

Please avoid any caffeine on the day of the scan. Caffeine can raise your heart rate which results in poorer quality images. Caffeine is found in tea, coffee, fizzy drinks, energy drinks, energy pills, diet pills, chocolate, some biscuits and some chocolate flavoured breakfast cereals. Otherwise, you can eat and drink normally.

Do not use Viagra or any other similar medication from 48 hours prior to the scan as it is not compatible with the medications required during the scan. Otherwise take your medication as normal. Please bring a list of your medications with you, as it is very important for us to know what you usually take.

When you arrive

Please report to the SEAL unit (Surgical Elective Admissions Lounge) at Arrowe Park Hospital. You will meet one of the nurses on this unit who will run through a check list with you, including questions about any health

conditions that you have, what medication you take and any allergies you may have.

You will need to change into a hospital gown. Your blood pressure and heart rate will be checked. Depending on your heart rate you may be given a beta blocker tablet to lower your heart rate. For patients who are not able to take beta blockers an alternative medication can be used.

A very small plastic tube (called a venflon) will be inserted through the skin into a vein in your arm. This will enable us to give you the injections required for the scan.

Once it is time for your scan you will be brought to the CT Department. You will meet a radiographer who will explain the procedure to you.

What happens during the scan?

You will be brought into the CT room and will lie on the CT scanner table.

Three small sticky electrode patches will be placed on your chest to allow us to monitor your heart rate. Occasionally it may be necessary to shave away some chest hair to allow the electrodes to work.

Depending on your heart rate an injection of beta blocker may be given. This can be required whether or not you have been a beta blocker tablet.

You will be asked to raise your arms above your head and keep them there throughout the scan.

The table will move into the scanner.

As part of the scan an injection of CT dye (contrast) will be given through the venflon. This is to allow us to assess the coronary arteries. The contrast may give you a feeling of a hot flush, a sensation that you are passing

water or a metallic taste in your mouth. This is quite common and only lasts for a short time.

You will be asked to hold your breath several times during the scan, for approximately 15 seconds at a time. This is very important in order to get good quality CT images. It would be very helpful if you could practice this at home. It is best to take a fairly shallow breath, rather than a deep breath, as this is more comfortable to hold.

The actual scan will only take ten minutes, although setting up the scan will take a little longer. After the scan we ask you to stay in the department for a short while, so that we can check that you are feeling ok.

You may eat and drink normally after the scan.

How will you get your results?

The results of the scan will be sent to the consultant, GP or clinic that requested the scan.

Other instructions

We are unable to provide supervision for other children during the scan, so please make your own provision for childcare whilst you attend this appointment.