

## Coronary Artery Calcium Scoring (CACS)

### **WHAT IS CORONARY ARTERY CALCIUM SCORING?**

Coronary artery calcium scoring has been used for over 20 years. It is an x-ray based imaging technique which detects and measures levels of calcium or chalk seen in fatty deposits or atherosclerotic plaques in coronary arteries.

The test is performed in a high speed gated CT scanner. The gated element means that the pictures are taken in time with the heart beat to reduce x ray dose and increase image quality.

### **WHY HAVE CT CORONARY ARTERY SCORING?**

A CACS can detect coronary plaque before symptoms occur. Plaque starts to deposit in the artery walls years before it narrows the artery to the point that symptoms develop. The amount of calcium or the coronary artery calcium (CAC) score is one of the strongest predictors of future cardiac events described in the medical literature. Because of previous large studies we know how much calcium would be expected for somebody of your sex and age. We can compare your result to see if you have more or less calcium than the average. Your CAC score can then help shape your prevention plan. Early detection of disease can improve success in taking preventative action and help determine whether your doctor will recommend statin medication.

### **BEFORE THE TEST**

- Please avoid caffeine and nicotine of 4 hours before the test
- Please wear loose fitting clothing, women will be asked to remove bras with metal underwiring. Chest piercings should be removed where possible

### **DURING THE TEST**

- Electrodes will be placed on your chest to measure your heart rate
- You will lie on an x ray table and be asked to hold your breath once or twice. This keeps the heart in one place. It is important to stay as still as possible. The test takes a matter of minutes
- No medicines are given and you cannot feel the images being taken

### **AFTER THE TEST**

- You are free to go, your doctor will go through the results with you and work with you to develop a tailored prevention plan.

### **PATIENT INFORMATION: CORONARY ARTERY CALCIUM SCORING (CACS)**

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The scan will be at the Great Western Hospital the radiology department will contact you to arrange an appointment time, their number is 01793 605051.