

PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Preparing for your coronary calcium score

A coronary calcium score is a quick, non-invasive CT scan that measures calcified plaque in your heart's arteries — one of the best indicators of your future heart-attack risk. Your scan is done at an I-MED Radiology clinic. Here's how it works and how to prepare.

**10–15 min**

the scan takes seconds

**No fasting**

no injection or dye

**Low-dose CT**

at an I-MED clinic

1 How it works

Because this scan uses a small dose of radiation, a clinician confirms it's right for you before any referral is issued.

- 1 Complete your online assessment.** We'll ask you to work through the Australian Heart Foundation's cardiovascular risk calculator so we understand your risk profile.
- 2 Have your pre-screen consult.** An i-screen clinician reviews your risk with you, confirms the scan is appropriate, and talks through the risks and limitations. Your referral is only issued once this is done.
- 3 We email your referral** along with instructions for your CT scan.
- 4 Book your scan at a local I-MED Radiology clinic.** I-MED runs one of Australia's largest clinic networks, so you can choose a location that suits you.
- 5 Get your results.** Your scan is reviewed by a qualified medical professional and appears in your secure i-screen dashboard with a clear, easy-to-understand explanation.

Is this scan right for you? A calcium score is generally most useful for people aged 50+ at moderate cardiovascular risk. It's usually not recommended if you have no major risk factors, if you already have symptoms (other tests suit you better), or if you're under 50 without a strong family history. Your pre-screen consult is there to check it's appropriate for you.

2 Before your scan

There's very little to do – but a steady, relaxed heart rate gives the clearest images.

- **On the day, avoid caffeine and smoking.** Coffee, tea, energy drinks and nicotine lift your heart rate, which can blur the scan – skip them on the day, and ideally for a few hours before.
- **Keep taking your usual medicines** unless your doctor tells you otherwise, and let the team know what you take.
- **No fasting and no injection** – eat and drink normally.
- **Wear comfortable, loose clothing.** You'll change into a gown, so it helps to leave metal jewellery at home; you may be asked to remove an underwire bra.
- **Bring your i-screen referral** and your Medicare card to the clinic.
- **Tell the radiographer if you have a pacemaker** or any implanted cardiac device.

Not during pregnancy



This scan uses X-rays, so it shouldn't be done if you are pregnant or trying to conceive. Please tell the team beforehand if there's any chance you could be pregnant.

3 On the day

The whole visit takes about 10–15 minutes; the scan itself is over in seconds.

- 1 The radiographer shows you to a change room and gives you a **gown**.
- 2 Up to **four small electrode patches** are placed on your chest and linked to an ECG, so the scan can sync to your heartbeat.
- 3 You lie on the CT table with your **arms above your head** and follow simple **breathing instructions** – usually a short breath-hold while the images are taken.
- 4 That's it – **no injections, no after-effects**. You can drive and return to normal activity straight away.

4 Your results

Your scan is reviewed by a qualified medical professional and your calcium score appears in your secure i-screen dashboard with a clear explanation. It's also sent to your referring clinician.

What the score means. Your **calcium (Agatston) score** reflects how much calcified plaque is in your coronary arteries, compared with others your age and sex. **Zero** means none was detected (lowest risk); higher numbers mean more plaque and higher risk. It's one important part of your risk picture – not the whole story – so talk it through with your doctor.

Incidental findings. Occasionally a heart scan picks up something unrelated to your coronary arteries that's worth a closer look. If that happens, we'll flag it so you and your doctor can follow up.

This test isn't for emergencies



A calcium score is a screening test for people without symptoms. If you have chest pain, severe breathlessness, fainting or other urgent symptoms now, don't wait – call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department.

The scan uses a **low dose of radiation** – about the same as a year of natural background radiation. Questions before your scan? Email us at info@i-screen.com.au and the team will be glad to help.