

# UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER PATIENT EDUCATION

## COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY ANGIOGRAPHY (CORONARY CTA)



Yours physician has referred you to the Diagnostic Services Department at United Hospital Center for a Computed Axial Tomography (CT) scan of your heart. In a CT scan, the X-ray beam moves in a circle around your body. This allows many different views and provides greater detail than a standard X-ray. Coronary CT Angiography is a non-invasive technique that allows a clear visualization of narrowed and clogged arteries that can cause heart attacks and strokes. It is useful in evaluating select patients with chest pain and shortness of breath. For some patients with chest pain, Coronary CTA can rule out the need for cardiac catheterization.

Prior to you exam, a nurse will start an IV and you will be give medication orally (Lopressor) to help lower your heart rate for this exam. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored for approximately 60-90 minutes before your scan. You will be escorted to the scanner once your heart is below 70 beat per minute. A CT Technologist will position you on the moveable CT table. The CT staff will be in an adjacent control area next to the CT scanner. Speakers inside the scanner will allow staff to talk with you and hear you. The technologist will be watching you at all times and be in constant communications.

The CT tech will take preliminary scans to help define the area to image. During that time you will be asked to hold your breath. Once the plan has been established, you will receive an injection of contrast media to “highlight” the coronary arteries. The technologist will ask you to hold your breath for a short time during the injection. As the contrast is injected, it may feel warm or give your mouth a metallic taste. This is a normal occurrence and will pass quickly. It is important to remain very still during the procedure. You may be asked to wait briefly while the images are reviewed to determine if more are needed. After the procedure you may resume your normal diet and activities. Drink a couple of extra glasses of water to help flush the IV contrast from your system.

To get ready for your CT, follow the instructions given to you by your nurse or doctor regarding special restrictions or medications. It is not necessary to fast prior to this exam, a light breakfast or lunch is fine. Wear comfortable, metal free clothing, though you may be asked to wear a hospital gown.

**LENGTH:** Approximately 2 hours.

If you are pregnant, or think you might be, tell your doctor and the technologist **BEFORE** the exam.

**DISCLAIMER:** The content contained in this patient education is presented solely with the intent of providing public service information on health and health-related issues. This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult your physician or other qualified health provider prior to utilizing any of the information presented in this patient education. UHC makes no warranty, representation or guaranty as to the content, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of the information presented in this patient education or that the information may be relied upon for any reason.