

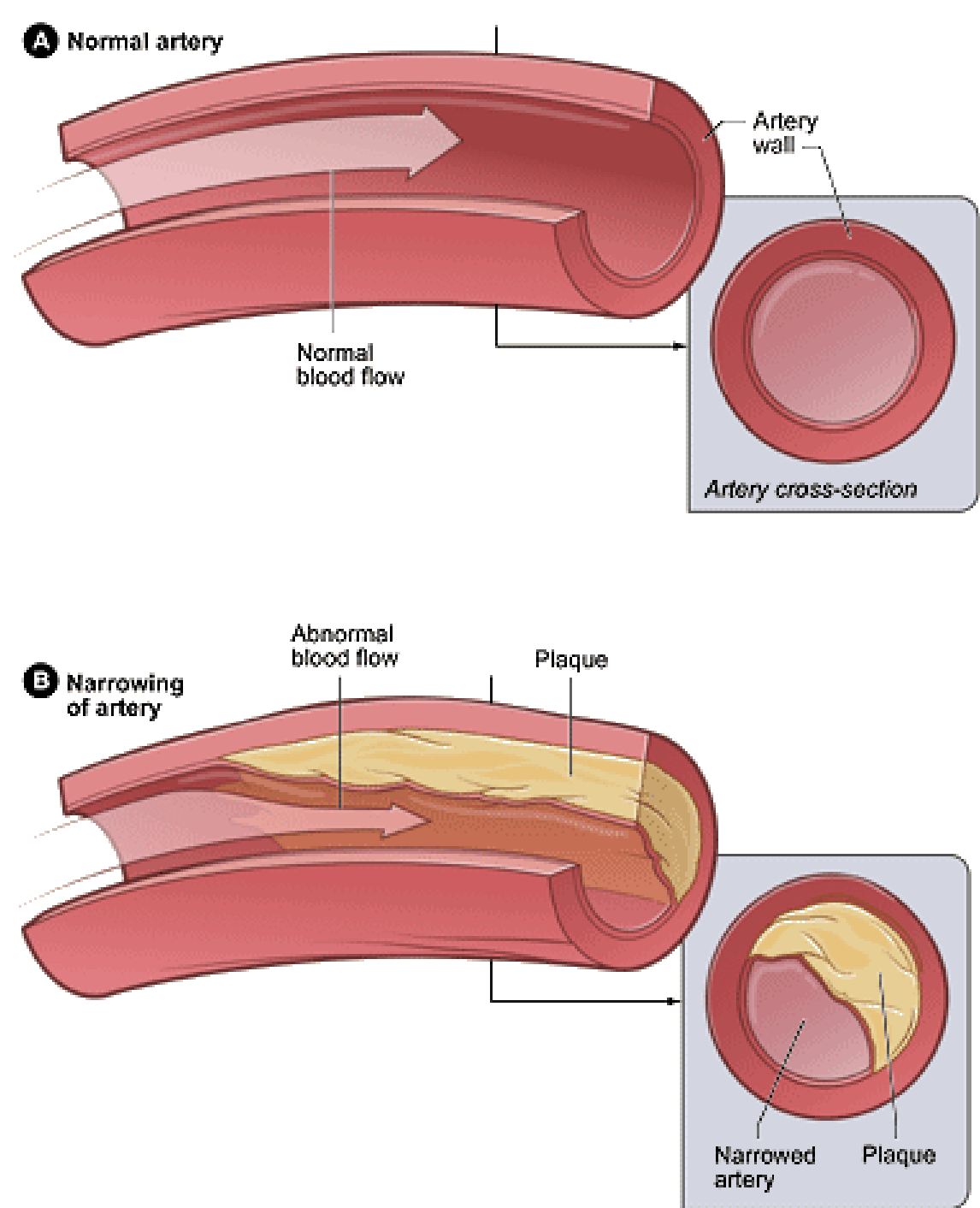
HEART SCAN

Learn how this study helps reduce your risk of having a heart attack over the next 5 years.

What is a heart scan?

A coronary calcium scan is a specialized type of heart scan that uses computerized tomography to obtain images that locate and identify the extent of plaques occluding your heart's arteries.[1] These plaques are made, in part, from cholesterol and calcium. [2] Over time, the plaques increase in size, resulting in narrowing and hardening of the arteries (figure 1), decreasing blood flow to your heart's muscle, and increasing your chance of experiencing a heart attack.[3][4] Sometimes, plaques may burst, leading to stroke or irreversible damage of other parts of your body if not treated promptly.[4]

Figure 1. Schematic illustration of plaque build-up in the coronary (heart) arteries.



The images obtained from the heart scan are analyzed by your doctor to measure your coronary artery calcification score and coronary plaque burden. The score ranges between 0 (no identifiable disease) to >400 (severe disease), and it is measured in Agatston units (table 1).[5][6] A high coronary artery calcification score should prompt consideration of aggressive risk factor modification or treatment initiation to prevent major cardiovascular events or death from a heart attack.[6]

CORONARY CALCIUM SCORE	SEVERITY
0 Agatston units	No identifiable disease
1 to 99 Agatston units	Mild disease
100 to 399 Agatston units	Moderate disease
400 or more Agatston units	Severe disease

Table 1. Score ranges and disease severity in coronary calcium scan.

Points you should discuss with your doctor prior to the test:

- Do I need to take this test?
- Which risk factors do I have which led to the prescribing of this test?
- Will the test benefit me?
- Will knowing the calcium score help improve my care?
- What should I do to prepare for the test?
- Do I need to be concerned about the amount of radiation used?
- Will my insurance cover this test?

When is a heart scan suggested?

Initially, your doctor will assess your cardiovascular risk.[5][6][7] Some of the most important risk factors are: high blood cholesterol levels, family history of heart attack, diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, history of smoking, overweight or obesity, and sedentary or high stress lifestyle.[5][6][7]

The study is recommended if:

- 1.You are 40 years or older, have NO symptoms, and have an intermediate risk for heart disease as determined by your doctor;
- 2.You have a borderline elevated risk for heart disease as determined by your doctor, and a more decisive test is needed prior to starting drug therapy, or;
- 3.You are concerned about restarting a treatment after discontinuation due to side effects.[5][7]

THE FACTS IN NUMBERS
48% of adult americans have a form of cardiovascular disease.

How to prepare for the test?

This test requires minimum preparation. However, as it involves a low-dose, yet safe, radiation exposure, it is recommended to inform your doctor if you think you are pregnant.[8] Prior to the test, make sure to:

- 1.Discuss with your doctor any medical conditions that may interfere with the test.
- 2.Wear comfortable and loose-fitting clothes; you may be asked to wear a gown. We encourage you to remove any external medical devices or jewelry prior to the test.
- 3.AVOID taking caffeinated products and CEASE smoking at least four hours prior to the test.

The procedure is **simple and non-invasive, taking around 10-15 minutes** with scan times of 20-30 seconds, depending on the number of passes made. After concluding the study, no special discharge instructions are needed, unless specified by your physician. Ask your doctor or visit our website for more information.