

Computed Tomography of the Heart

Dear patient,

We welcome you to your appointment in our service, taking place in the near future. Please bring your insurance document or a copy of your insurance certificate with you.

What is computed tomography (CT)?

CT produces cross-sectional images of the body as X-rays travel through the patient and are weakened depending on the different densities of various body tissues. The reconstructed cross-sectional CT-images depict these densities throughout the patient. Additionally, application of iodinated contrast agent through a peripheral vein enables visualization of the vessels. In case of CT of the heart, we use latest-generation CT-scanners and apply sophisticated protocols to visualize the structures of your heart and your coronary vessels with very high resolution and with minimal radiation exposure non-invasively, that is, without the need of invasive catheterization of the coronary vessels.

Preparation for a contrast-enhanced CT scan

- Stop intake of food for at least 4 hours prior to the examination
- By contrast, drinking enough water is recommended to help your kidneys eliminate the contrast agent we might apply
- Important: Do not drink coffee prior to the examination
- Please refrain from taking Viagra®, Sildenafil® or Revatio® at least 24 hours prior to the examination. Take all other medications as prescribed (please bring list of medications you are taking on a regular basis)
- In case of existing/possible pregnancy or if you breast-feed, please contact staff
- If you have lab results no older than 2 weeks, please bring them with you
- Please inform us upon arrival in our department if you have known allergies against contrast agents

If you have experienced claustrophobia in the past, please let our medical technicians know. If you have any questions prior to the examination, contact us at +41 (0) 44 255 1818 (option 3).

CT procedure

In most cases we will perform a contrast-enhanced CT scan. Thus, we will first establish peripheral venous access to enable infusion of the contrast agent and perform blood sampling to check your kidney function.

The complete examination will be performed within approximately 15-30 minutes during which you will be within the scanner only during a very short period of time as image acquisition takes only a few seconds with newest-generation scanners. During image acquisition it is important that you lay still and hold your breath so as not to disturb image acquisition. Furthermore, we will position your arms above your head for the time of acquisition.

Most of the time will be used for preparation outside of the scanner gantry on a bed-like table aiming to ensure optimal image quality, i.e. slowing your heart rate to less than 65 beats per minute with betablockers and maximally dilate your coronaries to better visualize them with nitroglycerine.

Allergies as an unwanted side effect of iodinated contrast agents occur rarely and can be treated effectively. Please inform us if you are aware of any allergies you might have.

After the CT scan

By drinking sufficient amounts of water you can help your kidneys to better eliminate the contrast agent. Please refrain from sports activities on the day of your examination if we need to give you betablockers.

Reporting

Evaluating your CT exam takes time. Thus, no definitive results can be given immediately after the exam. However, a detailed report will be sent to your physician by the end of the examination day.

Please note

If you need to cancel or delay your appointment, please contact us one working day prior to the exam at the latest. Otherwise, we are obliged to charge you for any costs generated.

Contact: +41 44 255 18 18 (option 3).

