



Carotid Intima-Media Thickness Test (CIMT)

A CIMT scan is a non-invasive technique using ultrasound (sound waves) to detect and quantify vascular disease, cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular risk before any symptoms occur. The CIMT measures the thickness of the inner two layers off the carotid arteries (the intima and media) and the analysis tells your physician about your health and your risk for cardiovascular disease, this test additionally tells your physician what your “vascular age” is. Early detection of increased thickness may indicate the need for a more aggressive approach to managing the risk factors casually associated with heart disease and stroke. In addition, the scan is able to detect presence of plaques in the arteries—a manifestation of more significant vascular disease.

While some tests involved a small dose of radiation, the Carotid Intima Media Thickness test (CIMT) uses sound waves (no radiation) and is uniquely suited to detect not just calcific (hard) plaques but more-subtle soft plaques in the carotid arteries (the arteries of the neck). The scan takes about 10 minutes and is performed by a sonographer.

Studies have shown that the presence of carotid plaque has a high correlation (>90.1) with coronary plaque (plaque in the heart arteries). The easy access to the carotid arteries in the neck therefore makes this test a very useful tool to indirectly assess your heart arteries. Several large studies have evaluated this test in patients of all ages, and have shown that increased CIMT and plaque in the carotid arteries can predict risk for stroke and heart attack.

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES FOR THE DAY OF YOUR EXAM:

- If you are unable to make your scheduled appointment, please call the office at least 24 hours prior to the day of your test
- Please arrive 15 minutes before scheduled time. Bring your insurance card and a picture ID to the front desk upon check in
- No special preparations are needed
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting, two-piece clothing. No jewelry
- You may return to your normal activites after the test
- Test results will be communicated by your ordering physician