



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert

Arizona Republic

Q: During the last month I have been seeing a lot of advertisements on the importance of being heart healthy and knowing your risk factors for heart disease. What can I do to find out if I am at risk for heart disease?

A: Astonishingly, more than 70 million Americans have heart disease and don't even know they have it. And there is a 30 percent chance that their first symptom will be a heart attack and death.

But there is help to identify people with heart disease. In fact, Catholic Healthcare West's (CHW) Chandler Regional Medical Center and Mercy Gilbert Medical Center now offers a **free** online evaluation tool to find out if you are at risk for cardiac disease. The HeartAware™ assessment takes just *seven minutes* to complete and is available to anyone who is interested in finding out if they are at risk for developing cardiac disease.

Once you have completed the online evaluation you will receive a personalized report and strictly confidential information that will help you:

- Assess your cardiovascular health status;
- Identify medical or lifestyle conditions that may lead to the development of the disease;
- Take action to reduce your level of risk; and
- Receive, at your option, free continuing education via email about your specific cardiovascular health and risk factors.

After completing the evaluation, and with your permission, I will call you to encourage that you follow-up with your physician, or to offer you a more detailed screening test using a specialized X-ray known as a computed tomography (CT) scan and a calcium score.

Cardiac calcium scoring determines if you have buildup of calcium on the walls of your coronary arteries, which indicates the presence of plaque in the coronary artery. The test helps to diagnose if you have heart disease in an early stage and will determine your risk of future heart attacks.

The CT scan is a simple, painless test that takes only a few minutes, and costs \$200. Once your scan is complete, our medical staff will go over your results with you. We recommend you share your score with your primary care physician, and we can help you find a physician if you don't have one.

If you are unsure if you are at risk for developing heart disease, please take the next seven minutes and log on to www.chwhealthspan.org/heartaware to take the free evaluation. It could save your life.



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Darcel Taylor, R.N., is the cardiac clinician for CHW's HeartAware™ program. To learn more about HeartAware™, or to arrange for a free, in-person consultation, please visit www.chwhealthspan.org/heartaware or call 480.728.3639.