

NHS GG&C Heart and Respiratory MCN guidance on the management of patients with incidental finding of coronary artery calcification on CT thorax.

Radiologists are now routinely reporting coronary artery calcification, if present, on plain CT scanning of the thorax. Many of these patients may already have a diagnosis of coronary artery disease and have been managed appropriately, so no further action will be required.

If this is not the case, then patients with coronary artery calcification (mild, moderate or severe) seen on non-cardiac imaging should be regarded as having established atherosclerotic arterial disease and offered statin therapy (atorvastatin 80mg daily) regardless of total blood cholesterol concentration and considered for anti-platelet therapy. ([Coronary Heart Disease and Stroke, Primary and Secondary Prevention \(Cholesterol\) \(181\) \(nhsggc.org.uk\)](#))

Patients should also be advised of the key benefits of lifestyle modification including smoking cessation, diet, weight loss, increased exercise, and reduced alcohol consumption, as appropriate. Ensure optimal management of other modifiable cardiovascular risk factors such as blood pressure and glycaemic control.

Secondary care physicians receiving these radiology reports, for example respiratory physicians, will inform the patient along the following lines:

“Your CT scan has also shown evidence of calcium deposits in the blood vessels supplying your heart muscle and this is associated with a risk of developing heart disease in the future. We would recommend that you contact your GP to discuss this. You may to start protective medication. We have contacted your practice directly to inform them of this finding on your scan.

There are other factors which can reduce the risk of developing heart disease. These include ensuring that your blood pressure is controlled and that you do not have diabetes and your practice will discuss this with you.”

For primary care, if the patients does not have symptoms suggestive of angina, no further investigation or intervention is required. Read code is: Asymptomatic Coronary Heart Disease G34z0.

Patients, without a previous diagnosis of coronary disease, who have symptoms suggestive of angina should be referred to cardiology OP.