**CTA (CT Angiogram)/Carotids**

**What is a CTA of the Carotids?**

CT scanning, often referred to as a CAT (Computerized Axial Tomography) scan, is a noninvasive X-ray test that is used to diagnose a variety of medical conditions. It provides detailed cross sectional images of the body part in question to provide more clarity and detailed images than traditional X-rays. CT angiography is used to examine the blood vessels of the neck and head. Angiography can be performed using CT or MRI. Routine protocol is to perform a CTA of the brain in conjunction with the neck.

**CPT Code**

- 70498 CTA Neck
- 70496 CTA Brain

**Indications**

With Contrast: Headache, neck pain, vertigo, syncope, aneurysm, stenosis, TIA or stroke symptoms, abnormal carotid ultrasound or MRA.

**Contraindications**

For contrast exams, patients on Glucophage/Metformin need a current creatinine test within 30 days of the exam. Additionally, the patient must not take medications the day of the exam and should remain off these medications for 48 hours after the CT. If the creatinine was normal prior to the CT, the patient may resume creatinine in 48 hours.

- Pregnancy.
- Allergy to contrast material.

**How Does Your Patient Prepare?**

Without contrast studies: No preparation is required.

With contrast studies: A current creatinine test within 30 days is required if the patient is 60 years of age or older, has diabetes, hypertension, or renal insufficiency. Additionally, the patient must be NPO for 6 hours prior to the exam. The patient should inform the doctor of any recent illnesses or other medical conditions, and if there is a history of heart disease, asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or thyroid problems. Any of these conditions may increase the risk of an unusual adverse effect.

**What Happens During the Test?**

The patient will be asked to remove any jewelry and the technologist will obtain a medical history. The patient will be positioned on the exam table. If contrast is indicated, the technologist will start an IV. The patient may feel warm and flushed for a few seconds. The patient will be asked to remain very still during the scanning process. The scan should take approximately 30 minutes.

**After the Test**

The patient may resume normal activities following the CT. If a contrast material was used and the patient is on Glucophage/Metformin, the patient must stay off the medication for 48 hours. If the patient’s creatinine was normal prior to the CT, the patient may resume taking the medication in 48 hours.

**The Results**
A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within one business day.

(Information adapted from www.radiologyinfo.org and Dr. Charles de Pena)

This information is intended for use as merely a guideline for referring physicians and their staff members only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Shawnee Mission Medical Center Radiology does not recommend any particular examination. Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders:

CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.