



“The American Heart Association’s recognition of EBT as the gold standard for the early detection of cardiovascular disease is an important milestone. This test needs to be **part of every doctors clinical practice** in evaluating how aggressively to manage their patients”

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## ‘EBT is Gold Standard for Early Detection of Heart Disease and for Guiding Clinical Care’

- American Heart Association



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The Wall Street Journal reported today that The American Heart Association is expected to release a new scientific statement that will say that Electron Beam Tomography (EBT) is the preferred approach for the early detection of heart disease. "The science has really come a long way," says Mathew Budoff, a preventive cardiologist at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Torrance, Calif., and head of the writing committee that is preparing the statement. "And all of them point in the same direction (in support of EBT)".

"This is a technology that is quite good at what it does -- identify coronary calcium in patients," says Robert Bonow, past president of the AHA and chief of cardiology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago. The new statement will say that **EBT is the preferred approach**, Dr. Budoff says, **because it is more accurate and exposes patients to significantly less radiation** than the computed tomography, or CT, scans. Like cholesterol and blood-pressure tests, the scans yield a numerical result. But unlike those common measures of heart risk, the scans also provide doctors and patients with a vivid image of the arteries, clearly highlighting any calcium deposits in white.

"It may be the best motivational tool I've seen in getting people to change their lifestyles," says Kevin Graham, a cardiologist at Minneapolis Heart Institute in Minnesota. "When people have objective evidence of coronary disease in graphic form in front of them, they get weak at the knees."

On the heels of a recent study reporting that stress testing can miss nearly 57% of early stage heart disease, this report underscores the value and accuracy of EBT in identifying early cardio-vascular disease. This information in helping doctors predict which patients are at risk of future heart attacks and decide how aggressively to treat those in danger.

Philip Greenland, chairman of preventive medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, Chicago is the author of one of the recent studies supporting the usefulness of calcium scores. Currently doctors often rely on a global risk score derived from the famous Framingham Heart Study to assess a patient's chances of a heart attack within the next decade. The score is based on factors such as age, gender, total cholesterol, levels of HDL or good cholesterol, blood pressure and whether a person smokes. Some formulas also include blood sugar and family history.

Patients whose EBT score indicates they have a 10% or lower chance of having a heart attack in 10 years are considered at low risk; those with a 20% chance or higher are at high risk, which calls for aggressive treatment to lower cholesterol and adopt healthier living habits. Patients with a 10% to 20% chance are considered at intermediate risk, where treatment is less certain.

Dr. Greenland's study, which involved 1,461 patients and was published last January in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that in such cases, a high calcium score could push patients into the high-risk category. A low score would indicate a patient is in less danger and that diet and exercise could be sufficient to help avoid heart trouble.

The Wall Street Journal cited the case of a healthy 39-year-old woman whose father had suffered a heart attack at age 52 and whose LDL or bad cholesterol was still a relatively high 138 after treatment with a cholesterol-lowering statin drug. The question was whether to get the LDL lower. Her heart scan turned up calcium levels that put her in the 95th percentile for her age -- indicating higher risk. Her drug dose was increased.

*As with any test, the clinical value is a function of the expertise of the person who interprets the data and skill of the clinician who uses that interpretation to guide their patients care. Here at HealthWISE, Dr John Rumberger, the world's foremost authority in the early detection and treatment of cardiovascular disease, **meets with each patient** to review their scan results and design a HealthPATH specifically tailored to their needs- in essence a cardiology consultation to their physician. Only HealthWISE can offer this level of care and expertise.*

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