

Instructions for Nuclear Cardiology Stress Tests

An intravenous catheter (I.V.) will be placed in your arm. Several electrodes will also be placed on your chest in order to record your heart rhythm (as in an EKG, or electrocardiogram).

The first radioactive injection will be administered into the I.V. line and you will wait 15-60 minutes before your first set of images under the camera. The first set of images will take approximately 10-15 minutes. You will lie on a narrow table and a special camera will rotate around your chest. It is important that you remain very still during all of the images. (Please note that you are not completely "inside" the camera, as you would be for an MRI.)

The next step is the stress test, which is usually conducted using a treadmill. For this portion of the procedure you will be connected to an EKG monitor (using the electrodes that were previously placed on your chest). A blood pressure cuff is placed on one arm and the I.V. is in the other arm. Your blood pressure, heart rate, and EKG rhythm are all closely monitored by the cardiologist during the stress test. Once the desired heart rate is reached, or as directed by the cardiologist, another radioactive injection will be administered through your I.V. line. If at any time during the test you experience shortness of breath, dizziness, fatigue or other discomfort, tell the cardiologist or technologist.

After the stress test portion is completed, you will have the final set of images, which will take approximately 20 minutes. There is a delay between the completion of the stress test and this set of images. Patients who did not walk on the treadmill will have a longer waiting period before the final set of images.

Safety issues. Any stress test may have some risks, and you should consult with your physician prior to the test if you have any concerns.

Radioactive injections that are used during this procedure are not dyes, and they are not known to cause any serious side effects. Nuclear medicine tests have been routinely performed around the world for over 30 years and are considered to be very safe procedures.

Nuclear cardiology stress tests vs. regular stress tests. Your physician would like to know if your heart is receiving enough blood flow, if you have coronary artery disease (CAD), and/or if known coronary disease has progressed in any way. The stress test can also help to determine how safe an exercise program can be for you. Sometimes, a regular stress test may not give true results, or may be contraindicated, for example if you have an abnormal EKG. For these reasons, your physician may order a nuclear cardiology stress test instead of or after a regular (exercise) stress test.

Difficulty walking on the treadmill. For patients who are unable to walk on the treadmill, an alternative type of stress test can be performed. A medication will be given to you either while walking slowly on the treadmill or while lying on a stretcher. These medications are used to create the same effect as exercising, called a *pharmacologic* stress test. The medications used to perform a pharmacologic stress test are Adenosine and Dobutamine. The results of a pharmacologic stress test are comparable to results from an exercise test performed on a treadmill.

Patients who will, or potentially will, undergo a pharmacologic stress test must inform the lab if they take any of the following medications, as these medications may interfere with a pharmacologic stress test:

- Aminophylline
- Aggrenox
- Dipyridamole
- Theodur
- Theophylline

The test will take **3 to 4 hours** from the time of your scheduled appointment. You may resume your daily activities when the test is completed and you are released by the technologist.

Preparing for the test. In order to obtain the most accurate information possible from this test, please follow the instructions below. **Call us at (240) 456-4772 or (410) 884-3600 before deviating from these instructions.**

- Please wear comfortable clothing and **shoes appropriate for exercise**. No sandals, clogs, or high heel shoes (sneakers are preferred).
- A short-sleeve shirt with plastic buttons or a loose t-shirt is recommended. Turtlenecks, tight-fitting tops, or shirts with metal buttons or zippers may **NOT** be worn for the test. Please do not wear perfumes, lotions, or powders.
- The lab does get cold (we need to keep the temperature low due to the sensitive medical equipment), so please bring a sweatshirt or jacket to wear.
- Female patients who will be doing an exercise stress test on the treadmill may prefer to wear a sports bra if you have one.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, and heavy sugars (cakes, cookies, pastries, etc.) for at least 24 hours before the test. Be aware that many decaffeinated products contain caffeine.
 - Some examples of products that contain caffeine are regular and decaffeinated coffee, hot and iced tea, some herbal teas, sodas/soft drinks, and ALL products that are made with or contain chocolate.

- Some migraine and painkiller medications that contain caffeine include Anacin, Excedrin, Vanquish, Fiorinal, Fioricet, and certain stimulants/diet pills such as NoDoz and Dexatrim.
- You may drink beverages such as milk or fruit juices up to 30 minutes prior to test time (remember, **do not drink** any caffeinated or decaffeinated beverages).
- There is no restriction on water; you may drink water at any time.
- **You may eat up to 2 hours before your appointment time.** This meal may consist of anything that is not otherwise restricted above. We will have a light snack and beverage available at the completion of your test, or you may bring your own snack for AFTER the test.
- We recommend that patients who are on insulin use half of their usual dose at least 2 hours before coming to the lab. If you are unsure about managing food intake and insulin dosage for this test, please call us.

Medication instructions. Please bring an accurate list of your medications with you to the lab on the day of the test. We need to know the names of your current medications, and you must bring any medications that you were told not to take before the test, as you will take them immediately after the stress test is completed. **Please review the following list for medications NOT to take, and contact the lab if you have any concerns about NOT taking these medications.**

DO NOT take the following BETA BLOCKER medications for two days prior to your test or the morning of your test, unless your physician gives you other instructions:

- Acebutolol
- Atenolol
- Betapace
- Betaxolol
- Bisoprolol
- Blocadren
- Brevibloc
- Corgard
- Coreg
- Esmolol
- Inderal
- Innopran
- Kerlone
- Labetalol
- Levatol
- Lopressor
- Metoprolol
- Nadolol
- Pindol

- Propanolol
- Sectral
- Sotalol
- Tenormin
- Timolol
- Toprol
- Transdate
- Visken
- Zebeta

DO NOT take the following CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKER medications the day before or the morning of your test.

- Adalat
- Caduet
- Calan
- Cardene
- Cardizem
- Cartia
- Covera
- Dilacor
- Dilt
- Diltiazem
- Dynacirc
- Felodipine
- Isoptin
- Lexxel
- Lotrel
- Nicardipine
- Nimotop
- Norvasc
- PeIndil
- Procardia
- Sular
- Tarka
- Taztia
- Tiazac
- Verapamil
- Verelan

DO NOT take LONG ACTING NITRATES on the day of your test until the test is completed.

- Nitro patches
- Isordil
- Imdur

- Isosorbide
- Nitro paste

DO NOT take the following BRONCHODIALATORS on the day of your test:

- AccuNeb
- Adrenalin
- Advair
- Albuterol
- Alupent
- Atrovent
- Brethine
- Brovana
- Combivent
- DuoNeb
- Foradil
- Ipratropium
- Maxair
- Metaproterenol
- MicroNefrin
- Perforomist
- Proair
- Proventil
- Serevent
- Spiriva
- Symbicort
- Terbutaline
- Ventolin
- Vospire
- Xopenex

DO NOT take the following ANTI-ARRHYTHMICS two days prior to your test and the day of your test:

- Atropine
- Betapace
- Brevibloc
- Cardizem
- Cordarone
- Covert
- Epinephrine
- Esmolol
- Isoproterenol
- Sotalol
- Xylocaine

DO NOT take the following ANTIPLATELET drugs on the day of your test:

- Aggrenox
- Dipyridamole

Please modify or hold ONLY the specific medications, beverages and foods listed above. Please TAKE all other medications unless those medications impair your ability to perform the test.

About your test results. If there are any areas of immediate concern, the cardiologist will discuss the results of your test with you before you leave the lab, and may also contact the physician who requested the test. A formal written report will be sent to your physician within two business days.