

Katy Cardiology/Memorial City Cardiology

Nuclear Stress Test Instructions

Cardiac nuclear imaging is also called a "perfusion scan." A small amount of radioactive material is injected into the bloodstream. Then a SPECT camera (similar to CT) images the tracer in the blood as it flows through the heart muscle. The tracer leaves your body within hours. This test can be done in our offices, **the entire test will take about 3-4 hours.**

Before Your Test

- When you schedule the test, be sure to mention all the medications you take. Ask if you should stop taking any of them prior to or the day of the test.
- No Beta-Blockers should be taken the day prior or the day of the test unless otherwise instructed. (Atenolol, Tenormin, Nadalol, Carvedilol, Metoprolol, Corgard, Propranolol, Toprol, Ziac and Lopressor)
- No Theophylline for 48 hours prior to a chemical stress test (not walking on treadmill).
- Before your test, stop smoking and avoid caffeine for 48 hours or as long as directed.
- Don't eat or drink for 8 hours before the test. Sips of water are okay.
- On the day of the test, dress for comfort. Wear a two-piece outfit, top and bottoms. Be sure to wear walking shoes. Avoid wearing necklaces or chains or metal buttons on shirts and avoid using hand lotion on the exam date.
- Bring a snack to eat after the exercise (or chemical infusion) part of the test.
- If you are Pregnant or might be pregnant inform the technologist.
- If you have diabetes, knee or hip problems, arthritis, asthma or chronic lung disease inform the technologist.

During Your Test

- An IV (intravenous) line will be started in your arm and the first injection of radioactive material will be given.
- Thirty minutes later images of your heart will be taken (prior to exercise).
- You then will be attached to **EKG** and blood pressure monitors. You will exercise on a treadmill. This increases the rate of blood flow to your heart muscle.
- When you reach your target heart rate another tracer is given to you through the IV.
- If you cannot exercise, special medications can be used to replace the exercise.
- Thirty minutes after the exercise or chemical infusion your heart will again be imaged.
- You must lie very still for up to 20 minutes. During this time, a SPECT scanner will be taking pictures. The images will show where blood flows through your heart muscle.



Be sure to tell the nurse or technologist if you feel any of the following during the test:

Chest, arm, or jaw discomfort
Leg cramps or pain

Severe shortness of breath
Dizziness

After Your Test

Before going home, find out when to resume taking any medications you were told to skip before the test. Most people can go back to their normal routine as soon as all parts of the test are finished.

Cancellations require 24 hour notice. We order the nuclear tracer specifically for each scheduled patient. It is expensive and it arrives the morning of the test and is only good for a few hours. If you do not appear for your test we will charge you \$225.00 for our loss.