



Pacific Cardiovascular Associates Medical Group

Nuclear Stress Test

Nuclear stress test or more commonly known as Myocardial Perfusion Imaging measures blood flow to your heart muscle both at rest and during stress on the heart. It's performed similarly to a routine exercise stress test, but provides images that can show areas of low blood flow through the heart, signs of a serious blockage, or areas of damaged heart muscle. A nuclear stress test usually involves taking two sets of images of your heart — one set after an exercise stress test and injection while you're exercising on a treadmill or after an injection of a medication that stresses your heart, and another set while you're at rest. It will be used to monitor your condition for changes or to evaluate treatment.

Patient Instructions

1. NO food for (4) hours prior to the test.
2. NO caffeine or decaffeinated drinks for (12) hours prior to the test (**NO coffee, tea, sodas, chocolates, OTC medicine that contain caffeine like Excedrin**)
3. DO NOT TAKE the following medications:
 - Calcium Channel Blocker for 24 hours
 - Examples: Calan, Cardizem, Verapamil, Tiazac, Isoptin
 - Theophylline or Theo-Dur for 24 hours
 - Imdur, Isosorbide, Mononitrate or Dinitrare for 6 hours
 - Diabetic Medications
4. Please bring your medication with you so you can take them after. If you use inhaler bring it with you.
5. Please take all blood pressure medications OTHER than the types listed above and below (Beta Blockers, Calcium Channel blockers).
6. Wear lightweight, comfortable clothing suitable for exercising and closed toed shoes suitable for walking. NO flip flops, sandals, dresses, skirts or pantyhose.
7. Please bring something to eat. It is part of the test.
8. Testing area is very cold; please bring a jacket/sweater.
9. **This test will not be performed if you are pregnant. If you are nursing, you will be given specific instructions following your test. Please call us immediately if you are pregnant or nursing and have been recommended for this test.**

10. Please check in by your appointment time.
11. We require you to sign an informed consent prior to the test. The consent describes the purpose, benefits and risk of the test in detail.
12. If you are unable to make your appointment due to a bona-fide emergency please cancel your appointment AT LEAST 48 hours prior to your appointment. A \$50.00 no show/cancellation fee will be charged for un-kept appointments not canceled 48 hours before the scheduled appointment time. **A specially ordered dose of medicine (radioactive tracer) will expire if it's not used for your test.**

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the test take?

The test will take around 3.5-4 hours and may require a brief return visit later the same day or the next day if the instructions are not followed. Please be sure to plan accordingly.

What should I expect?

You will have a small IV catheter placed in an arm vein. An injection is given for a heart scan at rest and also during the stress portion of the test. It will take approximately 10 min for the resting scan and 20 minutes for the stress scan. Some waiting between the injections and the scans is needed for quality images.

What if I can't walk on the treadmill?

If you are unable to walk on the treadmill or are unable to reach the required heart rate, then a medicine may be given to conduct your stress test. The medicine (Lexiscan) dilates the coronary arteries similar to exercise. It is important that you do not consume caffeine products or decaffeinated drinks before the test. If the medication is needed for your test, the caffeine will interfere with the results. This medication is safe and the clinical staff will monitor you closely.

What are the risks and possible side effects?

If medication is used for the stress test you may experience temporary symptoms such as low blood pressure, changes in heart rhythm, flushing, headache, chest pain, or very rarely heart attack. These effects are also possible with treadmill exercise. A physician is always present in the office during the test. If an unusual situation occurs, all the necessary medication, equipment and staff are available to respond. Medication or caffeine can also be given to reverse the effects of Lexiscan or to treat any changes caused by the stress testing.

After this test are there any restrictions to exposure to others?

There are no restrictions relating to exposure to others including pregnant women and children.