

Important Information Regarding Your Pharmacologic Nuclear Test

Your Physician has ordered a pharmacologic nuclear test in order to evaluate your heart's blood supply. A vasodilating drug is given to expand (dilate) your heart's arteries. This causes normal arteries to dilate more than diseased and obstructed arteries, thus diverting more of the nuclear isotope to the heart muscle supplied by normal arteries. The difference between normally and abnormally supplied heart muscles, if present, is identified by taking a picture of your heart. You are having a Pharmacologic test because you are unable to reach the target heart rate during exercise.

Why is a Pharmacologic Test Commonly Ordered?

1. To determine whether the symptoms you are having are due to any heart condition (symptoms such as: chest pain, palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, excessive tiredness)
2. To see if a person without symptoms has silent heart disease, i.e. blockages or coronary heart disease
3. To determine the risk of future heart problems in patients with known heart disease
4. Evaluate effectiveness of surgical procedure, angioplasty, or medical therapy
5. Pre-operative clearance
6. If you have a pacemaker, or certain EKG abnormalities

Preparation For The Test: (Your test will take an average of 3-4 hours)

Important: If you are pregnant, or suspect that you are pregnant, or you are breastfeeding; please discuss this with your doctor before undergoing this procedure.

- **Do not eat, drink or smoke for 4 hours before your test. You may have water to drink.**
- **Do not eat or drink caffeinated foods or beverages for 24 hours before your test. Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, chocolate, soft drinks cold and certain migraine preparations.**
Note: Decaffeinated products also contain small amounts of caffeine and may NOT be consumed.
- Wear comfortable loose fitting clothing. It is helpful to wear a short sleeved shirt that buttons in the front. **Do not wear shirts or blouses with beads or metal studs**, as it will interfere with the pictures.
- Do not apply lotions, oils or powders to the chest area.
- It is important to ask your Doctor
 - How to adjust your insulin and food intake prior to the test
 - If you should take your regular medication before the test
 - If you should take your heart medication before the test
- Always take your blood pressure medication
- Do not consume alcohol, take tranquilizers or sedatives for at least **4 hours** before the test
- You may bring a small snack and drink with you to eat after your stress test

You are required to notify our office at least 24 hours in advance if you must cancel your appointment. If you fail to do so, you will be billed a \$100.0 cancellation fee for the cost of the isotope.

What will happen To Me During The Test?

The nuclear test allows your doctor to see pictures of your heart when your heart is at rest and following the pharmacologic stress. To create those pictures you will receive 2 injections of a small amount of radioactive isotope. The level of radioactivity used is extremely small. An intravenous line (IV) will be placed in your arm before the first injection of the isotope. This IV line will be used later during the stress portion of the test, and for the injection of vasodilating drug. Following a resting period after the first injection, you will be under a gamma camera and pictures of your heart will be recorded. The camera does not produce any radiation. It will be placed close to your chest and pictures will be taken for approximately 15 minutes. This portion of the test is called the “rest study”.

Following your rest study, our trained staff will place electrodes on your chest that will constantly monitor your heart during the test. Your blood pressure will also be monitored. The vasodilating drug will be administered through your IV. During the test you are constantly monitored by the physician, physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner. The actual pharmacologic stress portion takes approximately 10 – 15 minutes, in addition to the preparation time. Then a second injection of the isotope will be administered. The radioisotope is taken up by your heart muscle and can be visualized by the gamma camera in the same manner as the rest study. You will be seated in the waiting room for approximately 45-60 minutes. The tech will bring you back in for the imaging portion of your “stress study” which takes approximately 15 minutes.

What happens After The Test?

When the test is over, you may eat or drink and return to your normal routine. You may resume your normal medications. The images will be reviewed by one of our Nuclear Cardiologists and results will be sent to your primary care Physician. You will be notified of the results within 1 week of the test.