

Nuclear Stress Test Instructions

Below is information to prepare for a nuclear stress test. Talk to your doctor if you have questions or concerns.

What is a nuclear stress test?

A nuclear stress test is also called a Myocardial Perfusion Scan (MPI). This test checks blood flow through your heart at rest and with stress. It can show if areas of the heart muscle are not getting enough blood flow.

How is the test done?

1. A radioactive tracer (radioactive material) is injected through an IV line in your arm to track blood flow through your heart.
2. You will lie still and a camera will go around you to get pictures of the blood flow through your heart.
3. You will then walk on a treadmill, or if you are not able to walk/run you will get a stress medicine, for the stress part of the exam.
 - You will have an EKG (electrocardiogram) monitor on the entire time.
4. You will then have more pictures taken of your heart after exercise or the stress medicine.
5. You could be at the hospital for 3 to 4 hours the day of your test.

How do I get ready for the test?

Do	Do Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tell your doctor if you could be pregnant. ✓ Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. ✓ Follow all instructions you got from your doctor or cardiology nurse about what medicine you should stop taking. ✓ Talk to your doctor if you are claustrophobic or feel anxious about the test. You can take anti-anxiety medicine 1 hour before the test. <p>You must have someone drive you home if you take this medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wear comfortable and loose fitting clothes. ✓ Wear supportive shoes for walking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not eat or drink anything for 6 hours before the test except for water as needed. ✗ Do not smoke or use nicotine for 6 hours before the test. ✗ Do not put any lotion or oil on your chest. ✗ Do not drink or eat anything with caffeine for 12 hours before the test. This includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regular and decaf coffee and tea – Sodas (pop) – Chocolate – Medicine (like Excedrin®) or supplements with caffeine

If you have diabetes:

You will get specific instructions from the nurse that calls you before your procedure. Check with the doctor that prescribes your diabetes medicine to make sure it is okay to change how you take it for this test.

How safe is a nuclear stress test?

- A nuclear stress test is a low-risk test with low radiation.
- A nurse, exercise physiologist or cardiac diagnostic technician, and radiology technologist will all be with you during the test. They will monitor you throughout the test and are in constant communication with the supervising doctor.
- Doctors are in the immediate area and are available at any time for help, questions, or concerns.

Are there side effects?

The team will talk to you about any possible side effects at the time of your test.

What if I need to cancel or reschedule?

- Try to cancel at least 24 hours before your appointment, if possible.
- If you are more than 15 minutes late or have had caffeine in the 12 hours before the test, you will need to reschedule.

