Two-day Nuclear Stress Test

Exercise or Chemical Stress Testing

Why do I need this test?

This test checks how well blood flows through your heart. You will come to the clinic on two days. Each visit will last about 1½ to 2 hours.

Please follow your doctor’s instructions before the test. When you arrive, please tell us if you have diabetes, may be pregnant, are breastfeeding, have a pacemaker or have an ICD (implantable defibrillator).

Your resting scan

Please stop eating 2 hours before the test. You may drink water or juice.

If you have diabetes:

• If you take insulin, ask your diabetes care team if you should take a ½ dose on the morning of your test.

• If you take diabetes medicine by mouth, don’t take it on the morning of your test. Bring it with you to take after the test. (If you have questions, call your diabetes care team.)

In the exam room:

1. We will place an IV (small needle) in the vein of your arm or hand.

2. We will inject radioactive liquid through the IV. This helps your heart show up better on the pictures we will take.

3. About 30 minutes later, you will lie down on a table. A special camera will rotate around your chest taking pictures of your heart. This lasts less than 30 minutes.

Your stress test

To get ready for the test, follow these guidelines:

• You may need to stop taking some medicines before the test. Follow your doctor’s orders.
  – Stop taking ____________________________ _______ hours before your test.
  – If you take a beta blocker:
    ☐ Keep taking it for this test.
    ☐ Do not take your beta blocker on the day before your test. And, do not take it on the day of your test. Bring it with you to take after the test.
  – If you take these medicines, stop taking them for 48 hours before the test:
    • Aggrenox or dipyridamole (Persantine, Permole)
    • Viagra, Cialis or Levitra.
  – If you take theophylline or aminophylline, stop taking it 12 hours before the test.
  – Do not take nitrates on the day of your test. Do not wear your Nitro-Patch.
– For patients with diabetes:
  • If you take insulin, ask your diabetes care team if you should take a ½ dose on the morning of your test.
  • If you take diabetes medicine by mouth, do not take it the morning of your test. Bring it with you to take after the test. (If you have questions, call your diabetes care team.)
  • Stop all caffeine 12 hours before the test.
    This includes coffee, tea, soda pop, chocolate and certain medicines (such as Anacin, Excedrin and NoDoz). Also avoid decaf coffee and tea, as these contain small amounts of caffeine.
  • No alcohol, smoking or other tobacco for 12 hours before the test.
  • Stop eating 3 hours before the test. You may drink water or juice.
  • Please wear a loose two-piece outfit. If you will have an exercise test, bring rubber-soled walking shoes.

In the exam room:

1. We will place an IV in your arm or hand.
2. We will inject a liquid through the IV. This is the same liquid you received for your resting scan.
3. To prepare you for the stress test, we will check your blood pressure. We will also attach small pads to your chest. The pads are hooked to EKG (electrocardiogram) machine. The machine shows how your heart is working during the test.
4. You will begin the stress test.
   • If you can exercise, you will walk on a treadmill for 5 to 15 minutes. You will start at a slow speed. We will slowly increase the speed and angle of incline.
   • If you cannot exercise, we will give you medicine to mimic the effects of exercise. The medicine goes through the IV slowly.
5. During the stress test, we will again inject liquid through your IV. (See Step 2.)
6. After the stress test, you will wait 20 to 45 minutes. We will then take more pictures of your heart.

What are the risks and benefits of this test?

This test will tell us more about your heart. It helps your doctor decide what kind of treatment you may need (if any).

The test carries some risks. Common risks include:
  • Changes in blood pressure.
  • Headache.
  • Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach).
  • Flushing or sweating.
  • Feeling dizzy or fainting.
  • Fast or slow heartbeat.

If you receive medicine to mimic exercise, you may also have:
  • Chest pain or shortness of breath.
   (If this happens at home, call 911.)
  • Irregular heartbeat.
  • Pain in the head, neck, jaw or back.
  • Tingling or numbness in the arms.
  • Feeling light-headed.

The risk for heart attack, stroke or death is very low. Please tell your care team if you have any symptoms. Before and during the test, your care team will check your heart, pulse and blood pressure often.

If you have concerns about the radiation used during this test, please talk to your doctor.

When will I know my results?

You should have your results within a few days. If you have not heard from us within one week, call your doctor.
How to Stop Your Beta-Blocker

Before your test, your doctor may ask you to stop taking your beta-blocker. **If so:**
- Do not take it the day before your test.
- And, do not take it on the day of your test.

Bring it with you when you arrive, so you can take it after the test.

This is a list of beta-blockers:

- acebutolol (Sectral)
- atenolol (Tenormin)
- Betachron (propranolol ER)
- betaxolol (Kerlone)
- bisoprolol (Zebeta)
-Blocadren (timolol)
- Bystolic (nebivolol)
- carteolol (Cartrol)
- carvedilol (Coreg)
- Corgard (nadolol)
- Corzide (bendroflumethiazide and nadolol)
- Inderal, Inderal LA, Inderal XL (propranolol, propranolol LA, propranolol XL)

- Inderide (propranolol and HCTZ)
- Kerlone (betaxolol)
- labetalol (Normodyne, Trandate)
- Levatol (penbutolol)
- Lopressor, Lopressor HCT (metoprolol, metoprolol and HCTZ)
- metoprolol, metoprolol XL (Lopressor, Toprol, Toprol XL)
- nadolol (Corgard)
- nebivolol (Bystolic)
- Normodyne (labetalol)
- penbutolol (Levatol)
- pindolol (Visken)

- propranolol, propranolol ER, propranolol LA, propranolol XL (Betachron, Inderal, Inderal LA, Inderal XL)
- Sectral (acebutolol)
- Tenoretic (atenolol and chlorthalidone)
- Tenormin (atenolol)
- Timolide (timolol and HCTZ)
- timolol (Blocadren)
- Toprol, Toprol XL (metoprolol, metoprolol XL)
- Trandate (labetalol, Normodyne)
- Visken (pindolol)
- Zebeta (bisoprolol)
- Ziac (bisoprolol and HCTZ)