

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Nuclear Cardiac Stress Test One and Two Day Imaging

What is a Nuclear Cardiac Stress Test?

Your doctor has suggested you have a Nuclear Cardiac Stress Test. A Cardiac Stress Test is a test to show how your heart functions when your heart rate is increased. You will exercise or be given a certain medicine to increase your heart rate.

A Nuclear Cardiac Stress test is a specialized test. A very small amount of a radioactive tracer is given in an IV. A radioactive tracer is given to see the flow of blood through the chambers of the heart and heart muscle. Images are taken when the radioactive tracer is carried within the blood through the heart and heart muscle. Sometimes these images are taken when you are resting and after you have exercised. Your doctor will use this information to determine the best treatment for you.

How do you get ready for the test?

- ✓ You will be contacted within 2 days of your test by a member of the cardiology department to discuss the test and to give you specific instructions in regards to the type of testing that will be performed and any restrictions.
- ✓ You may be asked to hold taking certain heart medications.
- ✓ Bring your medicine with you to the test. After the test you will be instructed to take any medications that were held.
- ✓ Bring your blood glucose monitor, test strips and medication if you have diabetes.
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothes and shoes you can exercise on a treadmill or bike in.

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- ✓ Wear clothing you can remove from the waist up. You will be given a gown to wear.
- ✓ Please arrive 30 minutes before the test is scheduled. The nuclear medicine technologist will ask you questions and place an IV in your arm.

What is done during the test?

The technologist will explain the test to you before you start. Ask questions if you don't understand. Before the study you will need to remove all clothing and jewelry from the waist up. You will be given a hospital gown to wear.

The nurse or technologist will start an IV. The IV will be used to give you the radioactive tracer. Injecting the radioactive tracer does not hurt.

For the stress test you will have EKG leads placed on your chest and you will be monitored closely. You may walk on a treadmill, ride a bike or receive a medicine. All these will increase your heart rate to stress your heart.

Once your heart rate is increased images of your heart will be taken. You will lie still on a table while the images are obtained. The technologist will give you instructions during the test. You will be asked to raise your arms over your head. It is important to lie still while the images are being obtained. You may also have the imaging done after the radioactive tracer is given when you are resting. You may be scheduled to come back a second day for more imaging studies.

What should you do after the test?

You will be able to return to normal activities after the test as approved by your doctor. You may take any medicine that has been held during the test. You may eat and drink.

How long will the test take?

A 1 day Nuclear Cardiac Stress Imaging Test takes about 2 1/2 hours. This includes several periods of waiting before imaging.

A 2 day Nuclear Cardiac Stress Imaging Test will take about 1 1/2 hours each day.

How do you get to your test?

Your appointment will start in the Cardiology Department. You will be directed where to go when you check in. If you have any questions you can contact Cardiology at 303-270-2670.

Please contact Cardiology at 303-270-2670 at least 12 hours prior to the scheduled testing time if you can not make it to your scheduled test.

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