

Your Cardiac Stress Test and Scans in Nuclear Medicine Information for Patients

PLEASE READ THIS LEAFLET CAREFULLY AT LEAST A DAY BEFORE YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT. IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TEST

What is the test for?

- The test is to look at the blood supply to your heart. The test is in two parts which means that you will have to come to the department on TWO different days.

What do I need to do before my test?

- On both days you may have a light breakfast. If your appointment is in the afternoon you may also have a light lunch.
- There are special instructions for your second day (some foods and some drinks will interfere with the test). You will be given these when you come for your first appointment.

Can I take my medicines as normal?

You **MUST** take any medicines you may have been prescribed **EXCEPT** for any of the following, DIPYRIDAMOLE, PERSANTIN, ASASANTIN. You must not take these on the day before the second appointment or on the day of the second appointment.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

- Please bring a list of your medicines with you.
- On both days **please bring something fatty with you to eat** e.g. cheese sandwiches, pasty or sausage roll. We will tell you when to eat them.

How long will I be at the Hospital?

Please allow 2 hours for your first appointment and up to 3 hours for the second.

Is there anything I should tell the staff before coming for the test?

- **If you weigh over 15 st 10 lb (100 kg)** please inform the department as soon as possible.
- Women between the ages of 12 and 55 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. If there is any doubt, we are legally obliged to perform a pregnancy test before proceeding. If you may be pregnant or are breast-feeding please tell us before you come, as we may not be able to do your test.
- Please tell us if you suffer from incontinence (bladder weakness).
- Please tell us if you planning to travel abroad within one week of your scan.

THE FIRST DAY

On the FIRST day we will look at how your heart works when you are sitting or lying relaxed (Rest Test). Shortly after you arrive you will be given a small radioactive injection into a vein in your arm or hand. This will make your heart show up on our camera.

We will then ask you to eat the fatty food that you have brought with you. This will help us to see your heart clearly when we scan you.

We will scan you as soon as we can, but you may need to wait for up to 1½ hours. The scan uses a special camera that moves around your chest. It takes about 25 minutes and you must lie very still - you can wear a shirt/blouse for the scan. Occasionally, we may need a second scan.

THE SECOND DAY

On the SECOND day we will look at how your heart works under stress. This involves a stress test followed by another scan with the special camera.

During the stress test, which takes about 30 minutes, we will monitor your heart rate (ECG) and blood pressure and set up a drip in your arm or hand. We will give you a drug which will make your heart work harder for a few minutes - it might make you feel warm but this effect wears off very quickly. We will also give you a small, radioactive injection, which will make your heart show up on our camera (these are both given through the same drip).

You may also be asked to perform light pedalling on a bicycle-type machine, although this is not essential. If you are able to cycle, please wear loose-fitting trousers and shoes suitable for pedalling.

As soon as this part is over, we will ask you to eat the fatty food that you have brought with you. This will help us to see your heart clearly when we scan you.

We will scan you as soon as we can, but you may need to wait for up to 1½ hours. The scan is the same as on your first day, but takes about 30 minutes and again you must lie very still. Occasionally, we may need a second scan.

You will need to remove your upper clothing for the stress test but you can wear a shirt/blouse for the scan.

On both days, while in the department, please use our special departmental patient toilet. Please ask for the door code.

Is it safe?

Yes. The amount of radiation is carefully monitored. It leaves your body very quickly and it does not make you feel sick or sleepy.

What can I do after the scan?

You can go home or to work, but please avoid close contact with pregnant women and young children until the following day.

What happens to the results?

We will send a report to the doctor who asked for the scan. They will arrange your follow up.

Further information online

For further information online about Nuclear Medicine please go to the "Patient Information" pages of the British Nuclear Medicine Society at www.bnms.org.uk. For general information about Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust go to www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk.