

CARDIAC STRESS/ NUCLEAR MEDICINE SCAN

Smithfield Imaging	919-938-7190
Clayton Imaging	919-585-8450
Scheduling	919-938-7449

WHAT IS CARDIAC NUCLEAR MEDICINE?

Cardiac nuclear medicine is useful in diagnosing and assessing coronary artery disease. Cardiac nuclear medicine exams provide pictures of the distribution of blood flow to the heart muscle and function of the heart. A cardiac stress test is a test used in medicine and cardiology to measure the heart's ability to respond to external stress in a controlled clinical environment.

WHAT TO EXPECT

A nurse or technologist will insert an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your hand or arm. The exam will usually begin with an injection of tracer while you are resting. Approximately 30 to 60 minutes after the tracer is injected, you will lie on Nuclear medicine imaging table with your arms over your head for about 15 minutes while images are recorded.

Following imaging, you will undergo a stress test, which requires you to exercise by walking on a treadmill. While you exercise, the electrical activity of your heart will be monitored by electrocardiography (ECG) and your blood pressure will be frequently measured. When blood flow to the heart has reached its peak, you will be given the radiotracer through your IV. After you complete the stress test, you may be asked to drink some water. Approximately 30 to 60 minutes later you will be placed on the imaging table a second time so a second series of images can be recorded. At this time, an ECG will also be placed to image the motion of your heart.

If you are unable to use a treadmill you will not exercise but you will be given a drug that will increase blood flow to the heart. There are many types of stressing medications. Your physician will determine the type of stressing medication used.

Actual scanning time for each heart scan varies from 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the type of scanner used. Total time in the nuclear medicine department will be approximately two to four hours.

HOW TO PREPARE

Follow these guidelines:

- **You must have nothing to eat or drink (including medications) after midnight the day of the test.**
- **No caffeine after 6 p.m. the day before the test.**
- If you are diabetic please consult your physician as to any special instructions concerning your diabetes prior to the test.
- **You cannot take any beta blocker medications for 24 hours prior to the test. Please consult with your physician in regards to your heart medications.**
- Please bring your current home medications or a list of your medications with you the day of the test.
- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and to change into a hospital gown.
- Remove jewelry, removable dental hardware, eye glasses, and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the images.

RESULTS

A radiologist will review your images and send a report to your doctor who ordered the test in 48- 72 hours. You'll get a call from your doctor's office to discuss the results and next steps. To check your results in our secure, online patient portal, My UNC Chart, visit www.myuncchart.org.