



CHANDLER CARDIOLOGY
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Nuclear Exercise Stress Test

What is a Nuclear Exercise Stress Test?

A nuclear exercise stress test is a diagnostic test used to evaluate blood flow to the heart. During the test a small amount of radioactive tracer is injected into a vein. A special camera, called a gamma camera, detects the radiation released by the tracer to produce computer images of the heart.

Can I eat or drink on the day of the test?

- Yes, however, **DO NOT** eat or drink anything for 4 hours prior to the test. If you must take medications, drink only small sips of water to help you swallow your pills.
- **AVOID ALL PRODUCTS CONTAINING CAFFEINE FOR 24 HOURS** prior to your test. In general, caffeine is found in coffee, tea, colas, Mountain Dew, and chocolate products.
- **ALSO AVOID DECAFFEINATED OR CAFFEINE-FREE PRODUCTS FOR 24 HOURS** prior to your test, as these products contain a small trace of caffeine.
- **DO NOT SMOKE ON THE DAY OF THE TEST**, as nicotine will interfere with the results of your test.

Should I take my medications on the day of the test?

Please bring a copy of all your medications, including over the counter medications, and supplements that you routinely take, to the test appointment. Please follow these guidelines about taking your medications the day of the test.

Medications with caffeine: **DO NOT** take any over the counter medications that contains caffeine (such as Excedrin, Anacin, diet pills and No Doz) **for 24 hours** prior to your test. Ask your physician, pharmacist, or nurse if you have questions about other medication that may contain caffeine.

If you have Asthma: Your physician will tell you not to take theophylline (Theo-Dur) **for 48 hours** before the test. Please plan to bring your asthma inhaler medication to your test.

If you have Diabetes: If you take insulin to control your blood sugar, ask your physician how much insulin you should take on the day of your test. Your physician how much insulin you should take on the day of your test. Your physician may tell you to take only half of your usual morning dose and to eat a light meal prior to your test. If you take pills to control your blood sugar, **DO NOT take your medication until after the test is complete.** Bring your diabetes medication with you so you can take it when the test is complete. **DO NOT** take your diabetes medication and skip a meal before the test.

If you own a glucose monitor, bring it with you to check your blood sugar levels before and after your test. If you think your blood sugar is low, tell lab personnel **IMMEDIATELY**. Plan to eat and take your blood sugar medication following your test.

What should I wear for the test?

Please wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing and shoes suitable for walking/jogging during the test.

If you take Heart Medications:

DO NOT take the following heart medications **48 hours** prior to test unless your physician tells you otherwise, or unless it is needed to treat chest discomfort the day of the test.

Toprol	Coreg	Labetalol	Esmolol
Carvedilol	Metoprolol	Calan	Inderal
Isoptin	Diltiazem	Betapace	Nadolol
Atenolol	Propranolol	Bisoprolol	Sotalol
Lopressor	Verapamil	Bystolic	Tenormin
Cardizem	Verelan	Corgard	Timolol

Your physician may also ask you to stop taking other heart medications on the day of your test. If you have any questions about your medications, ask your physician. Do not discontinue any medications without first talking with your physician.

What to expect during the test?

A nuclear medicine technologist will place an IV into a vein in your arm or hand and inject a small amount of radioactive tracer. The tracer is not a dye or contrast. After the tracer is injected, you will wait for about 30 minutes before the first set of “resting” images are taken.

Then you will be asked to lie very still under a gamma camera with both arms above your head for about 15 to 20 minutes. The camera will record images that show blood flow through your heart at rest.

Next, a technician will place electrodes on your chest to monitor your EKG.

You will start walking on a treadmill. At regular intervals, the difficulty of the exercises will increase until you achieve the target heart rate or until you develop symptoms. Then, a second dose of the radioactive tracer will be injected into the IV. Your heart rate, EKG and blood pressure will be monitored through the test. If you are unable to achieve your target heart rate, a medication may be given to simulate exercise.

About 30 minutes after exercising, you will be asked to again lie very still under the camera with both arms over your head for about 15 minutes. The camera will record images that show blood flow through your heart during exercise. These images will be compared to your resting images.

How long will the test last?

The appointment will take about **4-5 hours**. The actual exercise part of the test lasts about 7-12 minutes.

If you weigh over 200 pounds, your test may be scheduled as a two-day test. During the 2nd part of the test, you will be allowed a snack, juice, and crackers, which is provided. (You may bring a lunch).

How do I get the results of my test?

After completing your test, you should make a follow up appointment to go over the results of you testing. After the cardiologist reviews your test with you, the results will go into your electronic medical record.

***We require a 48-hour advance notice of cancelation on testing or we will have to charge you \$200 for the medication on this test. Also, any deductibles/coinsurance balances will be due at the time of services. ***