

Information for patients and carers

Stress Cardiac Scan

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is a Stress Cardiac Scan?

This is a test to look at the increased blood flow to the heart muscle when under stress conditions.

The procedure involves an injection followed by a scan using a gamma camera similar to the one shown in the image on page 4.

Please inform us before you attend:

- If you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you are breast/chest feeding
- If you weigh over 25 stone
- If you have problems standing or need a hoist to transfer

Preparation for the scan

Please follow the instructions below as well as those listed on your appointment letter:

- Please do not have caffeine products 24 hours prior to your appointment time, this includes:
 - Tea, coffee, decaffeinated tea and coffee, hot chocolate, fizzy and energy drinks
 - All chocolate products e.g. cake, bars or biscuits
 - Over the counter medicines such as cold and flu remedies that contain caffeine
- Please have nothing to eat or drink for 2 hours prior to your appointment time
- Please continue to take all of your medication as normal.
- Please bring your medication with you
- Please bring a sandwich with you (cheese or similar – it needs to contain fat, so please avoid salad only or diet products), you will be told when to eat this as part of the test

Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the hospital but usually they will not be allowed into the room when you have your examination. Please note that we have limited seating and do not have childcare facilities, therefore small children should not attend your appointment.

The stress procedure

In order to increase the blood flow around the heart, it is necessary for a radiographer to “stress” the heart. This involves using a drug that will increase the blood flow around the heart. You will be connected to an ECG and blood pressure monitor at all times.

This is a safe and accurate way to produce the stress required on your heart in order to give the doctors as much diagnostic information as possible.

The drug that is used to increase your heart rate may make you experience some side effects. These include feeling a little out of breath, increased heart rate, tightness across the chest or a headache. These are all effects that you would normally experience during exercise but they may feel more pronounced because you will be sitting down for this test.

Occasionally, some patients may feel the need to open their bowels. These effects are very short lived and we do not expect them to last for more than a few minutes.

A radiographer will also inject a small amount of radioactive tracer (in a liquid form) into a vein in your hand or arm, there are usually no side-effects from this injection. This will allow the blood flow to be seen on the camera during your scan.

Once the stress procedure is complete, you will need to wait approximately 30 - 45 minutes in our waiting area. During this time it is important that you drink 2 cups of water and eat the sandwich that you brought with you. This helps to give a better picture of your heart when you have your scan. Water is available in the waiting area.

Your scan

You will be asked to remove any metal objects such as belts, braces and jewellery. Female patients will also be asked to remove any undergarments around the chest area. You may keep your outer layers on or you may be given a hospital gown to wear. You will be connected to an ECG machine during the scan.



Special cameras which are about the size of a large suitcase will come very close to you during the scan but you will not be enclosed in a tunnel. You will be required to lie down and remain still during the scan and there will be someone nearby at all times. The images take approximately 30 minutes.

Are there any side effects?

We do not expect any side effects from the injection.

Are there any risks?

All medical procedures and tests carry both risks and benefits. Your doctor has requested this scan as they feel the information that we will gain is a greater benefit than the risk from being exposed to radiation.

Our injections contain a small amount of radioactivity that emits gamma rays (these are similar to x-rays). We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations to provide as much information as we can about your condition.

The results of your scan will give your doctor useful information about your condition and will help to plan your treatment.

After the scan

After your scan you must continue to follow the advice about drinking that you were given after the injection. You are free to go home or go back to work. Please avoid spending a long time in close contact with young children or pregnant women for the rest of the day. You should aim to spend no more than 15 minutes each hour cuddling or sitting next to them. It is also best if you don't share a bed with a child or a pregnant woman on the evening of your scan.

Travel abroad

Please inform the radiographer on arrival if you intend to travel abroad within 7 days of your scan. Radiation monitoring at security in airports or ports may detect some of the radiation you have received during your scan. We will give you a letter that will state what test you have had and this can be used when travelling.

Your results

The stress images will be reviewed after your visit. It may be necessary for you to return to have a second scan – a cardiac rest scan. This will compare how your heart looks at rest and may give extra information. Our radiologists will review the images and if you are required to return for the second test, you will be contacted with an appointment. If you do not need to return for a second scan, the results of this test will be sent to your consultant. You will not receive any results on the day of the scan.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please telephone Nuclear Medicine on **01772 522381**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice>

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone 08081962638

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Department: Radiology/Nuclear Medicine
Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support
Production date: February 2024
Review date: February 2027
JR 1109 v1