



Nuclear Exercise Stress Test

Testing Location

Stress Test Department
St. James Mercy Hospital, 1st Floor
411 Canisteo Street
Hornell NY, 14843

To schedule an appointment: 607-324-2879

To fax to scheduling: 607-324-8221

What is a nuclear Exercise Stress Test?

This test uses a radioactive material (isotope) that is injected into the bloodstream and allows the Nuclear Medicine Technologist to take pictures of your heart. Combining exercise (walking on the treadmill) with a nuclear imaging material produces images/pictures that will help your doctor to determine if there is an area of your heart that is not receiving enough blood. The nuclear imaging material is not a "dye." It is widely used and has been shown to be safe.

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

No. However, you may have small sips of water to help you swallow your medications.

Avoid all products that contain caffeine for 24 hours before the test. In general, caffeine is found in coffee, tea, colas and other soft drinks, most chocolate products, as well as strawberries (a small amount of caffeine). Caffeine will interfere with the results of the test. Also **avoid decaffeinated or caffeine-free products for 24 hours** before the test, as these products contain trace amounts of caffeine. **DO NOT SMOKE ON THE DAY OF THE TEST**, as nicotine will interfere with your test results.

Should I take my medications the day of the test?

Please take all medications as prescribed unless directed prior to the testing.

Products with caffeine: DO NOT take any over-the-counter products that contain caffeine (such as Excedrin®, Anacin®, diet pills and NoDoz®) for 24 hours before the test. Ask your physician, pharmacist or nurse if you have questions about other medications 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. **Bring all your asthma inhalers to the test with you.**

Remember: always consult with your physician prior to stopping or holding any medication. He or she will make the final decision on what medications are suitable for you to have prior to testing.

What should I wear for the test?

Please wear comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for walking/jogging during the test.

What to expect during the test

- Your test will take place in the Department of Nuclear Medicine/Stress Testing on the 1st floor. The testing area is supervised by a physician.
- A registered nurse 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 about 30 minutes before the first set of "resting" images are taken.
- Then you will be asked to lie very still under the 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, the stress test RN will place electrodes on your chest to monitor your EKG.
- Before the medication is infused into the IV, the RN will discuss the possible side effects so you will know what to expect.
- If you are able, you will slowly walk on a treadmill or walk in place during the administration of the medication; this will help circulate the medication. You will then be assisted to the exam table where you will remain for the duration of the testing.
- Your heart rate, EKG, and blood pressure will be monitored throughout the test and a physician will be present.
- After waiting about 30 minutes, you will be asked to again lie very still under the camera with both arms over your head for about 15-20 minutes. The camera will record images that show blood flow through your heart during cardiac stress/activity. These images will be compared to the first set.

How long will the test last?

The appointment will take about 3-4 hours. The actual exercise part of the test lasts about 7-12 minutes. Please **NOTE:** if you weigh more than 250 lbs., your procedure may be scheduled as a two-day test.

How do I get the results of my test?

All nuclear stress testing results are sent overnight to the reading physician. Once the physician has read your results, your primary care doctor will receive a report. Your doctor will then share the test results with you.