

Nuclear medicine department
Harefield Hospital

Having a nuclear medicine myocardial perfusion scan

This leaflet gives you general information about a myocardial perfusion scan and how to prepare for it. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.

What is nuclear medicine scan?

A nuclear medicine scan is a way of taking images of the body. You will be injected with a tracer, which is a substance with a small amount of radioactivity. The tracer highlights the part of the body we need to see in more detail.

About your scan

A myocardial perfusion scan shows how well your heart muscle is being supplied with blood. The scan is carried out in 2 parts.

During the first part, we will ask you to walk on a treadmill. Or we will ask you to use a medicine that has similar effects to exercise on the heart.

We will then inject the tracer. Immediately after the injection you need to eat something fatty, such as a cheese sandwich. You also need to drink both a milky drink and a fizzy drink. You can bring the food and drinks with you to hospital or buy them from the hospital restaurant.

The fatty meal helps the tracer to flow to the right area so we can take the best possible scan. We will wait about an hour before taking the scan. It usually takes 25 minutes to complete the scan and we will ask you to keep very still during this time.

The second part is done 2 hours later. We will inject another tracer and ask you to eat another fatty meal. The scan will follow 1 hour later.

In some cases, we may do the first and second parts of the scan in a different order. If this is the case, we will explain it to you in more detail.

How long does the scan appointment take?

If both parts of the scan are done on the same day, you will be with us for at least 5 hours. If we only do 1 part, you will be with us for at least 3 hours.

Important

Preparing for your myocardial perfusion scan

Medicines

- Stop taking these types of medicines 48 hours before your scan unless instructed not to do so:
 - beta-blockers, such as atenolol, bisoprolol and metoprolol
 - theophylline such as Uniphyllin
- Please bring all your medicines with you to the appointment.

Caffeine, drinks and food

- Avoid caffeine for 24 hours before your appointment. This includes tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks, decaffeinated drinks and chocolate. Any drinks that do not contain caffeine are fine. These include fruit juice, milk or water.
- You also need to avoid cold or pain relief medicines that contain caffeine.
- You can have a light breakfast such as toast or cereal, but no caffeine.
- Bring with you a large fatty meal, such as a cheese sandwich, together with a milky and fizzy drink. We will explain when you need to eat and drink them during your appointment with us.

Clothing

- Wear loose, comfortable clothes, such as trousers and trainers, as we may ask you to do some exercise.

Risks from radiation

The amount of radiation used during this scan is small and kept to a minimum. We believe that the benefits of having the scan far outweigh any risks.

The risk of a person getting cancer because of this radiation is low, 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 1,000 people. This level of risk is very small compared with the overall lifetime chance of getting cancer. The overall lifetime chance of getting cancer is around 1 in 2 people.

Advice for family members and carers

Coming to the nuclear medicine department with someone while they are having this scan results in a very small increase in radiation exposure.

To avoid exposing children unnecessarily to radiation, please do not bring them with you to the department.

The additional risk of cancer to an accompanying family member or carer is very low, about 1 in 110,000 people.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

You should not have this scan if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

Side effects

The substance we use for your injection will not make you sleepy and it will not stop you from driving a car.

People with diabetes

You do not need to change your diet or treatment. Please bring your insulin and any snacks as needed.

After your scan

You can eat, drink and take your beta-blockers as usual and continue with normal daily activities after your scan. To prevent unnecessary radiation exposure to children and pregnant women, avoid long periods of close contact with them for the first 24 hours after your test.

We will send your results to the hospital consultant who asked for the scan.

More information

We scan many people each day in our department. We will always try and keep to your appointment as closely as possible. If you are late or if there is an emergency patient, we may ask you to wait.

Hospital transport

If you need hospital transport to get to us, please ask your GP to arrange this.

Getting to the nuclear medicine department

The nuclear medicine department is in the ANZAC Centre, behind main reception in Harefield Hospital.

Contact us

If you have any questions about your scan or to change your appointment, please call us.

Phone 01895 826 514, 8am to 5pm or leave a message

Was this leaflet useful?

If you have any comments about this information, we'd be happy to hear from you.

email gstt.healthcontent@nhs.net

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please contact the department your appointment is with.

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern about any service or department at Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals. Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

- Royal Brompton Hospital **phone** 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital **phone** 01895 826 572

Or **email** gstt.rbhh-pals@nhs.net

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day,

phone 111 **web** www.111.nhs.uk

Become a member of the Trust

Members contribute to Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it's up to you how you get involved. To find out more, **phone** 0800 731 0319 **email** gstt.members@nhs.net or **web** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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A list of sources is available on request