Myocardial perfusion scan

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET NM11

Your appointment:

Date: .....

Time: .....

Location: .....

Please see our website for more clinic details.

Duration of examination

A myocardial perfusion scan is performed in two parts, each taking about one and a half hours, with a three-hour interval. You may leave the department between stages.

Please bring with you:

- Your request form
- Medicare and any
- Healthcare cards

Payment on the day of the examination is requested.

For more information regarding Benson Radiology please visit:

bensonradiology.com.au

What is a myocardial perfusion scan?

This scan aims to determine the presence of ischaemic heart disease (reduced blood flow to your heart) which is normally caused by narrowing of your coronary arteries.

A myocardial perfusion scan requires your heart to be placed under 'moderate stress' in order to determine if the blood flow to your heart is compromised by these conditions. This is done by an injection which simulates exercise (pharmacological stress).

Patient preparation

You will need to cease caffeine for 24-hour period. This includes all tea (including herbal), coffee, chocolate, cola and energy drinks. You may have a light breakfast on the day. You can continue to take medication as normal. If you suffer from asthma, please advise staff prior to your test.

What will happen during the examination?

A pharmacological myocardial perfusion scan is the alternative to the exercise scan. This method is used if you are unable to walk on a treadmill for an extended period or where the cardiologist believes it is a more accurate way to stress your heart.

A nuclear medicine technologist and a nuclear medicine specialist will be with you throughout the procedure.

This test is performed by giving you medication into a drip in your arm. The medication, Dipyridamole, works by dilating the blood vessels in your body, requiring your heart to work harder.

The medication is administered over a four-minute period. During this time, you may experience one or more of the following side effects: headache, stomach ache, heavy feeling in your head, neck or chest, shortness of breath or chest pain. You will be asked to advise us if you experience any of these symptoms. Your heart will be monitored constantly by an ECG machine. The nuclear medicine specialist may also ask you to perform some gentle exercises in conjunction with the medication.

After a further four minutes you will be given a second injection containing the radioactive tracer. This will travel in your bloodstream to your heart to 'highlight' your heart muscle on the scan. This shows if your coronary arteries are supplying enough blood to your heart at peak stress. If required at any stage these symptoms may be medically reversed. This completes the pharmacological stress part of your scan; you should now feel completely normal.

You will now have a 30-minute rest period. You will then be asked to lie on your back on the scanning bed with the gamma camera above your chest. Images will be taken for approximately 20 minutes.

The nuclear medicine specialist will review these images. You may be required to return after three to four hours for another scan of your heart 'at rest'. During this period, you may leave the department and have a light lunch but it is important you don't do any vigorous exercise.

The further imaging will involve another small amount of radioactive tracer, followed by a 30-minute rest period and then the additional scanning.

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Are there any risks?

There is a very small chance (0.01%), that the procedure may induce a small heart attack. To minimise risk, you will be constantly monitored for the duration of the test by an ECG machine, nursing staff and a nuclear medicine specialist.

Pregnant, breast-feeding patients and carers of infants

This examination is not suitable for pregnant women.

For some examinations it may be required to avoid prolonged close contact with infants and young children. If you have any queries regarding this, please speak with our technical staff on the day of your appointment.

After the examination

The images will be reviewed and reported by our nuclear medicine specialist. These will then be sent to your referring clinician.

For details on reporting timeframes, please speak with our reception staff.

It is important that you follow up the results of your examination with your referring clinician.

It is important you understand why and how we will be assisting you. If you have any questions, please call one of our clinics or speak to our staff on the day of your visit.

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