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Patient Name: _____ Appointment Time: _____

UNDERSTANDING YOUR **NUCLEAR STRESS TEST:**

PREPARING FOR YOUR TEST

- Do not eat or drink anything for 4-6 hours before your test
- Do not eat or drink any caffeinated products (like cola, Mountain Dew, tea, coffee or chocolate) for 48 hours before your test
- Report all medications you take. Ask if you should stop taking any of your medications before the test. Some medications, such as blood pressure medication, nitroglycerin and beta blockers can interfere with the test.
- Do not take over-the-counter medications that contain caffeine before your test. Some medications (diet pills, Anacin, Excedrin, Vanquish) contain caffeine.
- If you are pregnant or nursing, tell the staff before your test.

FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES:

- If you take insulin, do not take your morning dose. If you take diabetes pills, do not take your medication until after the test.

A NUCLEAR STRESS TEST USUALLY TAKES 2-4 HOURS.

WHAT IS A NUCLEAR STRESS TEST?

A nuclear stress test shows how well blood flows through your heart and arteries while you are resting and during physical exertion. In this test, a small amount of a radioactive substance is injected into your body. This substance allows images of the heart to be recorded so your doctor can see:

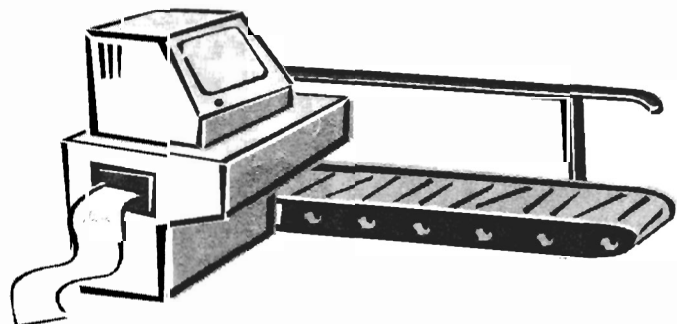
- * how well the heart is pumping blood
- * if a part of the heart has been damaged
- * if any of the arteries that feed the heart are blocked

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE TEST?

Two sets of images will be taken – one while you are resting and one after you have exercised.

RESTING IMAGES:

- An IV will be placed into a vein in your arm or hand. A radioactive substance will be given through the IV.
- You will be taken to the lab where a special camera reads traces of the radioactive substance and sends images to a monitor. You will be asked to lie still with your arms above your head. By looking at the monitor your doctor can see how blood flows through your heart and arteries.



AFTER YOUR TEST:

It is important to note that the radioactive substance used in this test is safe and will not harm your body. The substance will leave your body within a few hours.

YOUR TEST RESULTS:

The heart normally pumps more blood during times of physical exertion. If the test shows that blood flow is normal while you are resting, but not normal while you are exercising, your heart may not be getting enough blood during physical exertion.

If blood flow is not normal during rest and exercise, this may mean that a section of the heart muscle has been permanently damaged or that one or more of the arteries that supply part of your heart with blood may be blocked.

Test results will be discussed with you after your doctor has had a chance to review all of the information.

YOUR DOCTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Feeling uncertain about your health can be stressful for you and your family. Because you have had this test, you know that any advice about treatment is based on facts discovered during your test. You may be advised to have more tests or you may need medication or a surgical or non-surgical treatment. Whatever your doctor's recommendation, you can rest assured that it is based on the best possible information.

YOUR EXERCISE TEST:

- * Before the exercise part of the test, small disks called electrodes will be placed on your chest. The electrodes are connected to an electrocardiogram machine. An electrocardiogram charts your hearts electrical activity.
- * You will then walk on a treadmill. Your rate of exercise will slowly increase.
- * You will be asked how you are feeling. Be sure to report any symptoms you have , such as pain or discomfort in your chest, arm or jaw, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- * During exercise you will be given another injection of the radioactive substance.

If you are unable to exercise, you will be given medications that cause the heart and blood vessels to react as they would during exercise. The medications may cause sensations such as tightness in the throat and chest along with a hot, flushed feeling. This is normal and will go away in 4 or 5 minutes.

IMAGES WILL BE TAKEN AFTER EXERCISE:

- * You will be asked again to lie down for another scan of your heart. Images taken at this time show how blood moves through the arteries to all areas of the heart during physical exertion.
- * Your doctor will compare the images that were taken before and after exercise.

