

# Having a Nuclear Medicine Heart Scan

An information guide



# Having a Nuclear Medicine Heart Scan

## What is a Nuclear Medicine Heart Scan?

This is a test in which a small amount of radioactive material is used to obtain pictures of the blood flow to your heart. It is also known as a radio-isotope scan.

## Why do I need the procedure?

This procedure is to try and help diagnose angina and unexplained chest pain. The results of this test will allow the consultant cardiologist to evaluate which treatment path to follow.

## What is involved?

There are two parts to the test.

In the first part of the test a drug is injected into a vein making your heart work harder (working under 'stress'). You will then have a second injection of a small amount of radioactive material.

After waiting **40 to 60 minutes**, we will obtain some pictures showing the blood flow to your heart whilst it is working under stress.

This first part of the heart scan will take between **two to three hours**.

The second part of the heart scan tests your heart when you are resting. This scan will take **up to two hours**.

## **What are the risks/benefits/alternatives?**

The risks associated with the procedure include side effects to the stress agents used, although these do wear off very quickly.

The benefits are that it's a non-invasive test with an easy diagnosis. Alternatives include exercise ECG stressing and coronary angiography.

Many patients are imaged using this method because they are unsuitable for ECG exercise stressing or that test has failed to give a diagnosis. Coronary angiography is more invasive and has considerably more risks.

## **Important**

Please follow these instructions for the first part of the test:

- **Do not** drink anything containing caffeine from 6pm on the night before your test until after we have finished. For example: tea, coffee, cocoa, cola or diet cola - whether or not they state that they are 'decaffeinated'
- **Do not** eat chocolate during this time. Otherwise you may eat as normal.
- You may drink water or fruit juice.
- Have a light breakfast before your appointment.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Bring a sandwich.

## **Is the radiation dangerous?**

The amount of radiation you will receive is small and by the following day very little of it will remain in your body. If you need anymore information about this please contact the department.

### **When will I get the results of the test?**

The results will be sent to the doctor who asked for you to have the test. This may take up to 14 days after the second part of the test. If you have queries about this please speak to your referring doctor.

### **Is there anything I should tell the staff before the test?**

If you are, or think you are pregnant or breast feeding please telephone the department before attending for either part of the test.

## **Any other questions?**

If you are not well enough to travel by car or public transport then please contact your GP as they may be able to arrange an ambulance for you.

If you do come by car, please note that the hospital car parks become very busy, so please allow yourself plenty of time to find a parking space.

Wheelchair access is available at all the major entrances to the hospital and there are disabled toilet facilities in the department.

The staff in the nuclear medicine department want your visit to be as pleasant as possible.

If you have any questions, please telephone us or ask before your test starts.

Department of Nuclear Medicine,  
Level 0, Women's and Children's Block,  
North Manchester General Hospital, Delaunays Road,  
Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 5RB

Direct telephone number: **0161 720 2310**

Hospital switchboard: **0161 795 4567**

## **Further information**

Further information can be obtained from the British Nuclear Medicine Society or British Cardiology Society.



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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