

Nuclear Imaging

About Nuclear Imaging

During nuclear imaging, a small dose of a radioactive isotope is injected into the bloodstream. The radioisotope, or tracer, is carried through the bloodstream and into the myocardium, or heart muscle. Special cameras detect the radiation released from the tracers and record information about the heart muscle and blood flow. This information is then used to produce images of the heart on a computer screen or film. The radioactive isotopes used in nuclear imaging lose their radioactivity quickly and typically pass from the body within 24 hours. The test determines if there is low blood flow to the heart (blockages in the arteries) or if there is heart damage.

What to Expect

Nuclear imaging can be done in a hospital or in an outpatient healthcare facility. An electrocardiogram is usually taken before nuclear imaging begins. An IV, or intravenous catheter, is placed in the arm to administer the tracer. The patient lies on his or her back on a padded table under a camera. A small amount of tracer is injected into the catheter, and then the camera moves, capturing images at different angles or rotating slowly around the patient.

PreTest Guidelines

Patients are advised to avoid the following prior to nuclear imaging:

- Smoking;
- Drinking alcohol;
- Drinking caffeinated beverages; and
- Taking nonprescription medications.

In some instances, patients may be asked to discontinue a prescription medication.

Risk Factors for Possible Complications

Nuclear imaging is not advisable for pregnant or nursing women.

Nuclear imaging scans are usually completed in 2 to 3 hours.

Possible Complications

Complications associated with nuclear imaging include a slight risk of developing chest pain or an irregular heart beat.

Post-Test Guidelines

Patients are instructed to drink fluids to help flush the radioactive tracer.

A Valuable Diagnostic Tool

Cardiology Consultants of Westchester, P.C. is dedicated to providing area residents with world class heart care right in our neighborhood. Providing expertise in Nuclear Imaging is just one more example of our dedication to providing the best medical care possible to you and your family

Cardiology Consultants of Westchester together with Vascular Associates of Westchester and Primary Care & Cardiovascular Associates, is dedicated to improving the health of our patients by providing the highest quality cardiovascular care in a comfortable, compassionate environment. In addition, we are committed to contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the community through ongoing education and scientific inquiry.

