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Myocardial perfusion scintigraphy

Myocardial perfusion scintigraphy assesses blood flow to the heart muscle.

The test involves injecting a small amount of a radioactive substance labelled technetium-99m into your vein, which accumulates in the heart muscle (myocardium) proportionally to circulation. In addition, you will undergo a computed tomography scan to improve image quality.

Preparation for the test

- Do not eat or drink any products containing caffeine for 12 hours before the test. This includes coffee, hot chocolate, tea, Coca-Cola and chocolate.
- Do not take medications containing theophylline or aminophylline for 12 hours before the test.
- Dipyridamole should be discontinued two days before the test.
- You may have a light meal before the test (e.g. porridge, cottage cheese, sandwich). Be sure to drink fluids (except caffeinated drinks).

Please bring a cup of yoghurt, sour cream or an egg sandwichwith you to the test to eat during a break to promote the excretion of the tracer with bile.

Course of the test

Myocardial perfusion scintigraphy consists of two stages:

1) STRESS – a stress test with the subsequent recording of blood flow to the heart muscle

2) REST– recording of blood flow to the heart muscle at rest

If both scans (STRESS and REST) are done on the same day, they will take about 5 hours.

After the test

On the day of the test, it is recommended that you drink at least 1.5-2 litres of water and empty your bladder often to facilitate the excretion of the radioactive tracer from your body.

Within 24 hours after the test, prolonged close contact (staying closer than 2 metres for more than 2 hours) with small children and pregnant women should be avoided.

Breastfeeding should be discontinued for 24 hours. After the test, breast milk must be removed with a breast pump within 24 hours and thrown away.