

A Patient's Guide to Cardiac PET Imaging



What to expect and how
to prepare for your exam



What is a cardiac PET exam?

Cardiac Positron Emission Tomography (PET) exams help to evaluate heart health by measuring the blood flow brought by the coronary arteries to the heart muscle. For decades, doctors have used cardiac PET scans to safely and accurately identify the presence or absence of coronary artery disease in people who have had symptoms and/or risk factors. Exam results can also indicate if any follow-up treatment is needed. If you are already being treated for a heart-related condition, your doctor can also use the results to help manage your treatment plan.

Only a doctor can decide if a cardiac PET exam is right for you.

Special precautions may be taken for patients with the following conditions:

- Congestive heart failure
- Diabetes
- Asthma or lung disease
- Pregnancy, nursing or potential pregnancy
- Allergies to caffeine, theophylline, aminophylline, or dipyridamole
- Claudication (cramping of leg muscles with walking)

How do I prepare for the cardiac PET exam?¹

Knowing what to expect ahead of time will make your experience easier. Ask your doctor for specific instructions to prepare for your exam, as well as how long it might take.

You may be asked to make a few important changes before the exam:

- You may be asked to temporarily stop taking certain medications. It is very important that you check with your doctor BEFORE discontinuing any medication.
- You may be asked to not eat or drink anything for a period of time before your exam.
- You may be asked to avoid consuming caffeine products for at least 12-24 hours before your exam.

You may be asked to provide some important information:

- You will be asked if you have any allergies. Please be prepared to discuss this with the supervising doctor.
- Plan to bring a list of all your medications to the exam.



How to dress:

Wear comfortable clothing and leave your jewelry at home. You may want to dress in layers, just in case you get too cold or warm.

How does the cardiac PET exam work?

Trained medical personnel will be right there with you throughout the procedure, filling you in on what to expect with each step of the exam. Try to feel calm and relaxed during the exam.

- Most cardiac PET exams take less than 1 hour; however, a longer exam should not be cause for concern.
- The examination team will ask questions about your medical history. Be sure to report all medications you are taking.
- You will be asked to lie down on a scanning table made especially for the PET camera.
- Medication will be administered through an IV line in a vein in your arm. Small pads called electrodes will be placed on your chest so the medical team can monitor the electrical activity of your heart throughout the study. A small amount of a radiopharmaceutical will be given through your IV line. This lets the PET camera capture pictures of your heart.

Communication is important! Your medical team encourages you to ask questions if you have any concerns, so be sure to do so!

Quickly report any symptoms or concerns you experience before, during and after the exam, including chest pain, shortness of breath, palpitations, headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, or a flushed feeling during the test.



Appointment tip:

When you make your appointment, you should consider that you'll need to skip eating and caffeine for several hours beforehand.

How are the results determined?

- A doctor trained in the interpretation of cardiac PET exams will review the pictures of your heart to assess blood flow to your heart muscle and/or to look for any heart muscle damage.
- The doctor will send a report to the doctor who ordered the exam.
- Your doctor will contact you or schedule a follow-up office visit to review your test results.



REFERENCE: 1. Strauss HW, Miller DD, Wittry MD, et al. Procedure guidelines for myocardial perfusion imaging 2.0. *Society of Nuclear Medicine procedure guidelines manual*. 2001–2002.

The individuals who appear in this brochure are for illustrative purposes only. All persons depicted are models and not real patients.

Your cardiac PET exam is scheduled for:

Date:

Time:

Be sure to follow the pre-exam eating and
drinking instructions you will receive.

Address:

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Questions? Call: