

What Is a Cardiac PET Stress Test?

A Cardiac PET Stress Test is a diagnostic imaging procedure used to evaluate blood flow (perfusion) to the heart muscle, assess cardiac function, and detect the presence or extent of coronary artery disease. The test combines positron emission tomography (PET) imaging with a pharmacologic stress agent to evaluate how the heart performs under stress. No exercise is required, and the imaging portion of the exam typically takes approximately 20 minutes.

Preparation Instructions

Please review the following instructions carefully prior to your appointment:

1. **Arrival Time** - Please arrive **20 minutes before** your scheduled appointment time.
2. **Tobacco Use** - Do not smoke or use any tobacco products on the day of your exam.
3. **Food and Drink**
 - If your appointment is in the morning, you may have a light carbohydrate breakfast (such as toast, an English muffin, or oatmeal) with water only.
 - If your appointment is in the afternoon, you may have a light snack beforehand.
 - Unless otherwise instructed, avoid heavy meals before your exam.
4. **Caffeine Restrictions** - Do **not** consume any caffeine for **24 hours** before your appointment. This includes:
 - Coffee (including decaffeinated coffee)
 - Tea
 - Soda
 - Chocolate, hot chocolate, and chocolate milk
 - Energy drinks
 - Certain over-the-counter medications containing caffeine, such as Anacin[®], Excedrin[®], and NoDoz[®]

Important: Decaffeinated products still contain small amounts of caffeine and must also be avoided. Consumption of caffeine within 24 hours of your appointment may result in cancellation and rescheduling of your test.
5. **Anxiety or Claustrophobia** - If you experience anxiety or claustrophobia, please let your ordering provider know. Anti-anxiety medications can be prescribed to be taken prior to test. An assigned driver will be required for these situations.
6. **Intravenous (IV) Medication Administration** - During the exam, a radioactive tracer and a vasodilating stress medication will be administered through an intravenous (IV) line placed in your arm.
7. **Medication Restrictions** - Do not take **Nitroglycerin** or any erectile dysfunction medications, including **Viagra[®] (sildenafil)**, **Cialis[®] (tadalafil)**, or **Levitra[®] (vardenafil)**, within **72 hours** of your test. Continue taking all other prescribed medications as directed unless your physician has instructed you otherwise.

8. **Hydration for Difficult IV Access** - If you are known to be a difficult IV start (“hard stick”), please increase your water intake beginning 24 hours before your appointment to help improve hydration and facilitate vein access.
9. **Positioning During the Exam** - You will be required to lie flat on your back for approximately 20 minutes with your arms extended above your head. If you are unable to maintain this position, please notify our office prior to your appointment.
10. **Clothing and Skin Products** - Wear loose, comfortable clothing. On the day of your exam, do not apply oils, lotions, creams, or powders to your skin.

NOTE: Insurance coverage and out-of-pocket costs vary based on your individual insurance plan and benefits. We strongly recommend that you contact your insurance company directly prior to your appointment to verify coverage and determine any copays, deductibles, coinsurance, or other potential out-of-pocket expenses related to your upcoming PET stress test. The member services phone number is typically located on the back of your insurance card.

Common CPT/HCPCS codes associated with a PET stress test may include: 78431, 78434, A9555, J2785, and 93015. Codes listed are provided for informational purposes only and may vary based on the services performed and individual clinical needs.