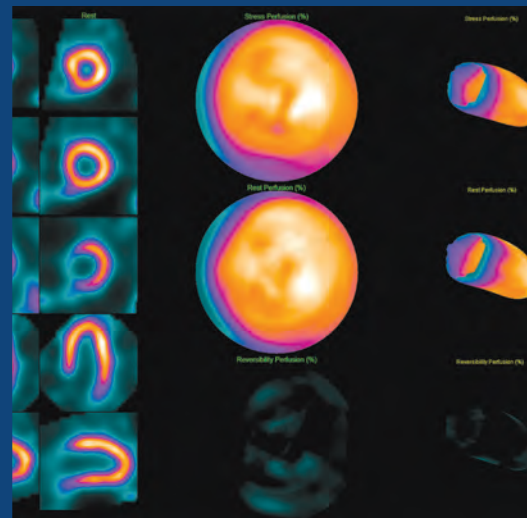




RB&HH

SPECIALIST CARE

Your nuclear medicine myocardial perfusion scan



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This leaflet gives you general information about your myocardial perfusion scan and how to prepare for it. It does not replace the need for personal advice from a qualified healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions.

What is a myocardial perfusion scan?

A nuclear medicine scan provides information about your body to help with your diagnosis and treatment. Tracers, substances containing a small amount of radioactivity, are used to highlight different areas of the body depending on the test being carried out.

A myocardial perfusion scan is a nuclear medicine test that shows how well your heart muscle is being supplied with blood. It is sometimes also called a technetium scan or a thallium scan.

Getting ready for the scan

Please prepare for your scan as described below. This helps to avoid any delay in carrying out your test and helps to make sure that the test is carried out effectively.

Caffeine, drinks and food

Caffeine can affect the result of your test by interfering with the medications that we use.

For 24 hours before your appointment, please do not eat or drink anything containing caffeine including:

- Tea or coffee. This includes green tea and decaffeinated tea or coffee, because these contain small amounts of caffeine.
- Chocolate, including drinking chocolate.
- Colas and other drinks, such as energy or sports drinks that contain caffeine (check the label).
- Cold or pain relief medications that contain caffeine.

Any drinks that do not contain caffeine are fine. This includes water, milk, fruit juice, soya milk, and any herbal infusions that do not contain caffeine.

For two hours before your appointment:

- Do not eat any solid foods.
- Drink clear fluids only.

You will be able to eat after the first part of the process is complete, so you may want to bring a light lunch or snack with you.

Medicines and inhalers

We cannot carry out your scan unless we know all the medications you are taking. This helps us choose the most appropriate method for your test.

When you come for your scan, please bring a list of all the medicines that you are taking. Please include any inhalers, sprays and over the counter non-prescription medicines.

If you cannot bring a list, please bring all the medicines that you are taking in their original packaging.

If you will need to take any of your regular medications when you are in the department for your scan, please bring them with you.

Dipyridamole (also called **Asasantin** or **Persantin**) – if this is one of your usual medications, stop taking this 48 hours before the scan. This will be discussed with you when you call to arrange your appointment.

All other medications can be taken as normal.

People with diabetes

You do not need to change your diet or treatment. Please bring any medications and snacks that you may need.

Clothing

Please wear loose, comfortable clothes. This allows us to attach monitoring leads and a blood pressure cuff to your body. Trousers are best as we may ask you to do some gentle exercise. Wear comfortable, flat shoes or trainers.

Children

In order to avoid unnecessary radiation exposure to children, do not bring children to the nuclear medicine department.

Female patients

If you are pregnant, or think you may be pregnant, please tell us before your scan. Even small amounts of radiation can harm unborn babies.

If you are breastfeeding, you can still have the scan, but it is important that you contact us for advice before you come in for the scan.

What happens during the scan?

Prior to your scan we will review your medical history and symptoms with you so that we can select the most suitable method for your test. We will explain the procedure fully and answer any questions that you may have.

A small tube is placed into a vein in your arm so that we can administer the medication and tracer used for the scan. Depending on your medical history, we may ask you to pedal on a seated exercise bike for four to six minutes. If you are unable to exercise for any reason, do not worry as we can still carry out the scan.

At this stage, we give a medication that prepares your heart for the scan. This medication can sometimes cause side effects for a few minutes, such as mild shortness of breath or a feeling of warmth in the body. After that, you will receive the radioactive tracer that allows us to take images of your heart.

First scan

We take the scan on a bed or reclining chair. We will ask you to be as still as you can, with your arms relaxed and away from your chest. The scanner is positioned close to your chest before the scan begins. The scan takes approximately 15 minutes.

The scan does not cause discomfort and the machinery is quiet. Your body is not enclosed at any stage. Clinical staff will be close to you at all times.

Second scan

Depending on your medical history and the results of your first scan, we usually take a second scan after you have had two to four hours rest. Comparing this resting scan with your first scan can provide additional information about your heart.

You can rest between the scans and have a drink or light snack, if you wish. After the second scan, we check your images, and then a member of staff will let you know that your test is complete.

Two-day scans

We ask some patients, depending on their personal and medical history, to have the two scans on separate days. This allows us to ensure that the total radiation exposure and any associated risks are kept as low as practical. If this is the most appropriate way to carry out your scan, we will discuss this with you when you telephone to book your appointment. Each of the two visits to the department will be about 60 to 90 minutes long.

What are the risks of having the scan?

Myocardial perfusion scanning has an excellent safety record. Like most medical tests and procedures, there is some risk involved. The specialist team involved in your care will assess your medical history to make sure that the benefits of the information provided by the scan outweigh the small risks.

General risks

There is a very low risk that any medication or exercise required for the test could cause an abnormal heart rhythm or a heart attack. The risk of heart attack is about 1 in 20,000 cases. There is also a very low risk of death, again 1 in 20,000 cases.

If you can walk at a medium pace for six minutes without problems, then the risk is even lower. We will find out about any risk to you from exercise before we start the test and answer any questions you may have.

Radiation risks

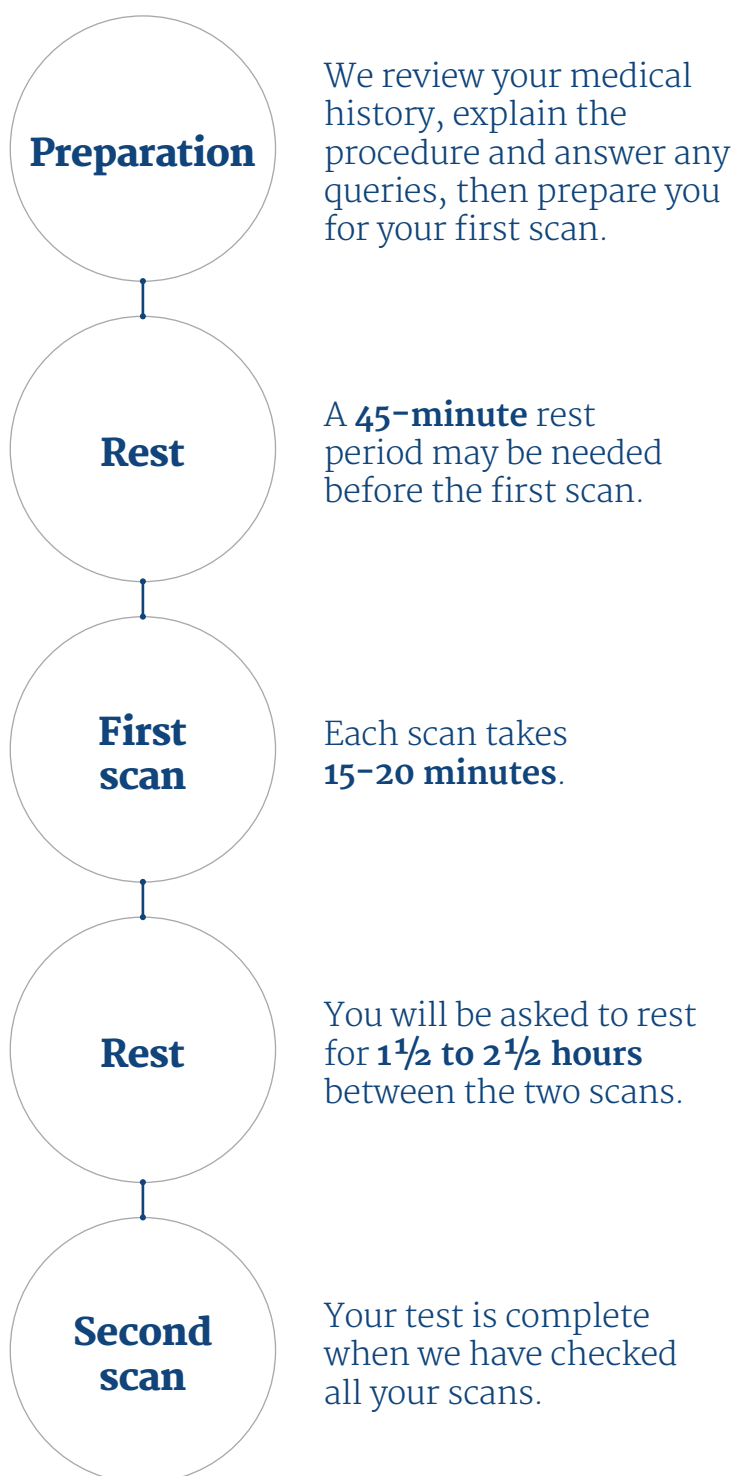
The tracers we use produce a small amount of radiation similar to that used in a CT scan.

The risk of a fatal cancer occurring because of this radiation is low (1 in 10,000 to 1 in 1,000). This level of risk is very small compared with your overall lifetime chance of getting cancer. Please ask us if you would like more information about this.



How long does the scan take?

If you are having your scan done in one visit you can expect to be in the department for three to five hours in total. This includes periods of rest, as shown below:



Payment information

You will need to pay at the time of the scan. We accept cash, a UK bank cheque, and debit or credit cards (but not Diners' Card or American Express). If the invoice is to be settled by a third party such as an insurance company or embassy, you must bring a letter or number of authorisation. If you do not bring this we will ask you to contact your insurance company or embassy before proceeding with your scan.

We will send the results of your scan to the consultant who referred you within one working day of your test.

What happens after the scan?

After your scan you can resume your normal daily activities. There are no lasting side effects and you will be able to eat and drink as normal. You will be able to drive after the scan if you wish.

We always try to keep to your appointment time, but there can occasionally be delays due to technical issues or for other reasons. We will keep you informed if there is any delay.

Contact with others living at home with you

The radioactive tracer given to you during your test continues to produce a small amount of radiation afterwards. To keep radiation exposure to others to a minimum, we suggest taking the precautions shown in the table below with **children 11 years old and under and pregnant women who live with you**.

Tracer used:	<i>Technetium</i>	<i>Thallium</i>
Avoid prolonged close contact for:	24 hours	Three days
Maximum close contact period:	30 minutes	Three hours per day for three days after

Close contact means being less than one metre away. Short periods of close contact are permitted as stated in the above table. It is fine for you to be further than a metre from any other persons at any time after either type of scan.

Travelling after your scan

The very small amount of radiation left in your body after the scan can be detected by equipment such as airport security scanners. If you are travelling within the periods stated in the table below, we can provide a letter that will give security staff the information they need. We will tell you which tracer you have been given.

Tracer used:	<i>Technetium</i>	<i>Thallium</i>
Letter recommended if travelling abroad:	Less than one week after scan	Less than one month from scan

Getting to the Nuclear Medicine department

Royal Brompton Hospital is a 15-minute walk from South Kensington tube station, which is on the Circle, District and Piccadilly London underground lines. Several bus routes serve the hospital.

A map of the local area is provided when you arrange an appointment. For more information on reaching us, please visit the travel information page on our website:

www.rbht.nhs.uk/brompton-directions

Please note that there is no parking at the hospital and very limited parking in the local area.

When you reach the main hospital reception on Sydney Street, follow the signs to the lift. Go up to level 3 in the lift or stairs and then follow the signs to the Nuclear Medicine department.

If you need help, ask at the main hospital reception desk. The receptionist can arrange for a porter to help you to get to the department.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any queries about your appointment time, please contact our Private Patient Secretary on **020 7351 8884**.

If you need to contact the Nuclear Medicine Department, please contact us on **020 7351 8666**.

If you have questions about your myocardial perfusion scan, please leave a message on our answerphone (**020 7351 8667**). We will call you back as soon as possible. You can also email us at:

nmadvice@rbht.nhs.uk

You can find more information about nuclear medicine scans at:
www.rbht.nhs.uk/nuclear-medicine



If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call PALS on:

Royal Brompton Hospital – **020 7349 7715**

Harefield Hospital – **01895 826 572**

or email **pals@rbht.nhs.uk**.

This is a confidential service.



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