



CARDIAC PET SCAN

What it is

Cardiac positron emission tomography (PET) scan is a type of non-invasive test that produces pictures of the heart. It uses nuclear tracers that travel to the heart through the blood. It provides information about blood flow to the heart muscle and the metabolism of the heart muscle cells. Your physician may order this test to diagnose coronary artery disease (CAD) as well as other cardiac conditions. This test is not currently offered in Barrie, and you may need to travel to another city in order to complete this test if required.

A PET scan is a type of nuclear medicine test. During the test you will receive an intravenous injection into your arm of a radioactive tracer. The tracer travels through the veins back to the heart where a small dose of radiation is released. You will be lying in a large 'gamma' camera scanner that will detect the radiation released and this will produce clear images of your heart. The camera is 360 degrees around your body and so a very detailed 3-D reconstructed picture of the heart can be completed in several thin slices. This provides very detailed information about the blood flow to various parts of the heart.

Performance/Preparation

- Avoid caffeine and caffeine containing drinks or alcohol for 24 hours before your test.
- Don't eat for 4-6 hours before the test. You may drink water.

This scan is safe for most patients. There is always a risk when radiation is used for medical tests, however the risk associated with this test is small. The dose of radiation used for this test is small, and your body eliminates it within 24 hours. The radiation dose is similar to that used in coronary angiograms, CT scans, myocardial perfusion imaging scans and several X rays. If you are pregnant, might be pregnant, or breastfeeding, then tell your doctor before having this test. It may harm your baby. If you have concerns about the risks of the test, talk to your doctor.

Duration

The test will take between 1-3 hours, and so wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Medications

If you have diabetes and take insulin, ask your doctor about how much insulin you can take before the scan. Some parts of the test might affect your blood sugar, and so your blood sugar levels will be monitored during the test.

Tell the doctor ordering the test about all of your medications. Your doctor may advise you to take your medications as usual or to stop your medications for the test.

Driving

There are no restrictions to driving commercially or privately after a PET scan.