

# YOUR DOCTOR HAS ORDERED A CARDIAC PET SCAN



A patient guide to answer frequently asked questions about cardiac PET imaging and what you can expect

You have received this pamphlet because your doctor has prescribed a cardiac PET imaging test for you or someone for whom you care.

This test will give your doctor information to help them understand the symptoms you or a loved one is experiencing. The information will also guide your doctor in establishing the best treatment plan for you.

This guide will help you understand what you could expect and how to prepare for your cardiac PET test.



This guide does not replace having a conversation with your doctor about this test.

If you have any questions after reading this guide, be sure to discuss them with your doctor.

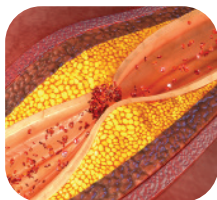
## What is a cardiac PET scan?

A cardiac positron emission tomography scan (PET scan) is a diagnostic test used to help your doctor diagnose coronary artery disease (CAD), guide treatment of a heart condition, or assess damage from a heart attack.

## What is a CAD?

CAD occurs when arteries leading to your heart become clogged. This is caused by a buildup of fatty deposits (plaque) made up of cholesterol and other substances.

The buildup narrows your arteries which deprives your heart of the oxygen and nutrients it needs.



This can cause chest pains (angina) and shortness of breath. If undetected, a complete blockage could cause a heart attack or cardiac arrest.

## Why am I getting this test?

A cardiac PET scan will show your doctor where there may be a decrease of blood flow to areas of your heart and help them decide how best to manage your condition.

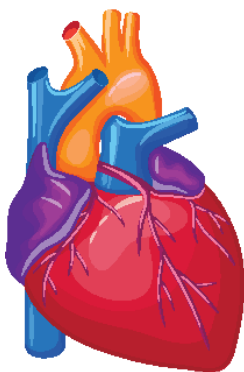
It involves injecting a small amount of radioactive tracer, Rubidium-82 (Rb-82) into the bloodstream which shows the blood flow through the heart muscle.

The rubidium flowing through cardiac arteries emits signals that are read by a special PET scanner that produces images allowing your doctor to visualize the blood flow to and through your heart.

## What is Rubidium?

Rubidium-82 is the radioactive tracer your doctor will use to perform your PET scan.

It is a valuable tool for diagnosing heart disease because it allows your doctor to see how well blood flows into the heart muscle.



## Will I be exposed to radiation?

Simply put, yes; it is a radioactive tracer. However, the amount of radiation exposure is small, and is eliminated rapidly.

Since your physician has ordered a Cardiac PET test for you, they have determined that the benefits of the test should outweigh any risk of exposure, which is not much higher than the radiation you receive from natural sources in a year.

**Ask your doctor if you have any questions about your cardiac PET scan.**

## How is the test performed?

Generally the test is performed in two stages; **REST Imaging** and **STRESS Imaging**.

### REST Imaging

Small electrodes are placed on your chest and attached to a monitor that records your heart's electrical activity and heart rate.

An intravenous line (IV) is placed in your arm, and a small amount of radioactive tracer (Rubidium 82 Chloride) is injected by a special infusion system.



You will lie still on a scanner table that is slid into a PET scanner. Detectors will record the radioactive flow patterns of the tracer in your heart and produce pictures (images) of your heart.



## **STRESS Imaging**

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Next, you will be injected with a pharmacological stress drug to increase the blood flow to your heart. Your heart rate will increase and you may feel uncomfortable for a very short period of time.

When your heart reaches a peak stress level, you will receive another small amount of radioactive tracer. Another set of pictures is taken while your heart is under stress conditions.



Both sets of images are compared to identify any differences, and a report with results will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test.

### **When can I return to work?**

After the PET scan is complete you will be able to leave the imaging facility and carry on with your day as usual, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

## How to Prepare for Your Test

Caffeine and certain medications will interfere with your exam, so be sure to follow your doctor's instructions when preparing for your test.

- ✓ You will be asked not to eat or drink before your appointment. Drinking water is okay.
- ✓ Bring a list of **all** the medications you are currently taking
- ✓ Do not wear jewelry or other metal objects
- ✓ You will be asked to refrain from the use of tobacco and any product containing nicotine





## What should I tell my doctor before the test?

Tell your doctor if you:

- Are being treated for heart disease
- Have heart failure
- Have high or low blood pressure
- Have asthma
- Have diabetes
- Have medical problems or allergies
- Are pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or if you are a nursing mother, as this may change the type of test you will receive.

## How safe is the test?

Any cardiac PET scan and the drugs administered for the test have risks. Your doctor should make sure that during your test there is continuous heart monitoring and that emergency cardiac treatment is readily available.

You should talk to your doctor about the risks versus the benefits of this test.



# Your Cardiac PET Scan

Be sure to follow all pre-test instructions you receive from your doctor.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Physician:** \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

Write down any questions you may have for your doctor or instructions your doctor may provide.

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**Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about your cardiac PET scan.**



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Jubilant DraxImage Inc.  
dba Jubilant Radiopharma.  
Phone: 1-888-633-5343  
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2019-US-RUBY-00028