You are scheduled for Red Cell Mass testing on __________________ at __________________.

Please report to TC100 in Mitchell Hospital 20 minutes before your appointment time to register for the test.

ABOUT THE TEST
Red Cell Mass testing is used to diagnose polycythemia; a type of blood disorder. A radioactive tracer is used for the test. It will be injected into your vein. The amount of radioactivity is small and well within limits that are safe. You will be at the medical center about 4 hours.

NOTE: Patients who are pregnant or may be pregnant should consult their physician before having this test.

PREPARATION FOR THE TEST
There is no preparation required for this test.

HOW IS THE TEST PERFORMED?
When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine Department, a technologist will confirm your identity and ask you questions about your medical history. He/she will explain the test to you and answer any questions you may have. The technologist will place two (2) intravenous lines (IV) in your hand or arm. One will be used for the first of three (3) blood draws. The first blood sample will be labeled with a radioactive tracer. The process takes about half an hour. After your blood is labeled the technologist, will again confirm your identity and reinject the blood through the IV. The IV will be removed after the blood is reinjected. This is necessary because small amounts of the radioactive tracer are left in the IV tube and the tubing must be measured to determine the amount of the remaining radioactive tracer. The second IV will be used for two more blood draws at (1) hour and two (2) hours. You will be discharged after the third blood sample is taken. After you leave the department the technologist will measure how much radioactive tracer is present in the blood samples and calculate your red cell mass.

AFTER THE TEST
You may resume your normal activities and diet after the test. A Nuclear Medicine physician will interpret the test and the results will be sent to the ordering physician. If you have any questions about the procedure or cannot keep the appointment, please call the Nuclear Medicine scheduling staff at 773-795-9723.