



What is a Stress Echocardiogram with Exercise?

A stress echocardiogram with exercise is a painless, non-invasive test (no surgery or cutting skin). The test takes about 1 hour.

During this test, you are attached to a monitor that shows the electrical activity of your heart while pictures are taken with a machine called a “sonogram”. This test uses ultrasound (sound waves) to examine blood flow to your heart during stress (such as exercise) and at rest. The doctor tests your heart rate, blood pressure, heart electrical activity (called “EKG” or “ECG”), and the movement of your heart wall.

This test helps your doctor:

- Find out if you have coronary artery disease (CAD)
- Find out the possible cause of symptoms such as chest pain (angina)
- Find a safe level of exercise for you
- Help find out if you may be at risk for dangerous heart-related conditions, like a heart attack

Note: If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor. You may not be able to have this test.

Before the Test

- **DO NOT eat or drink 6 hours before the test except for plain drinking water:** You may drink water anytime.
- **No food or drink with caffeine for 24 hours before the test:** No coffee, tea, sodas with caffeine, or chocolate.
- **You receive a confirmation letter** by mail that includes important information about how to prepare for this test.
- **Please bring the requisition form signed by your doctor** to your appointment or we may not be able to do your test.
- **About your medicines:** Ask your doctor which of your regular medicines to take or stop before the test.
- Wear soft-soled shoes or sneakers/running shoes and comfortable, loose clothing (pants or shorts). You are asked to undress from the waist up and wear a short gown for privacy and comfort.

During the Test

- First, electrodes (thin wires) are placed on your chest. A blood pressure cuff is wrapped around your arm. An intravenous (IV) line (a small plastic tube in a vein) is placed in your arm/hand, if needed.
- A cardiac technician takes ultrasound pictures of your heart by placing a transducer (a wand-like object) on your chest. This takes a few minutes.
- The staff may use a contrast agent (liquefied gas) during the test to get a better image of your heart.
- After the contrast agent is injected, the sonographer takes additional images of your heart.
- Next, you walk on the treadmill for as long as you can. The speed and the slope of the treadmill increase slowly. As you exercise, walking may get more difficult and your heart rate and blood pressure rise. This is normal and you are watched closely.
- **Tell the doctor or nurse if you have chest pain or feel tired, lightheaded, or nauseated.**
- Immediately after exercise, you lie on your left side and more pictures of your heart are taken.
- Your heart rhythm and blood pressure are monitored after the exercise.
- If an IV was placed it is removed.

After the Test

- You can return to your normal diet. It is good to eat and drink fluids after the test.
- You may drive yourself home after the test.
- Return to your normal activities (for example, you may return to work).
- A cardiologist reviews the test results.
- The final report of your test is given to your doctor.

More Ways to Learn

- Go to www.cpmc.org/learning to learn more about heart disease.
- Visit the American Heart Association Web site at www.americanheart.org.

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Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).