

What is a Regular Cardiac Exercise Stress Test?

A regular cardiac exercise stress test is a painless, non-invasive test (no needles or cutting skin). This test measures electrical (EKG/ECG) changes to your heart during stress (like exercise). This test takes 45 minutes. The results of this test help your doctor diagnose coronary artery disease (CAD).

Note: If you are pregnant, have asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), talk to your doctor before the test.

Before the Test

You get a confirmation letter by mail that tells you how to prepare for this test. **Please follow these instructions carefully.**

Note: If your test is scheduled within the next 72 hours, you get more information over the phone or by email.

Prepare for the Test

- **DO NOT eat or drink for 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.
- **Bring the requisition form signed by your doctor** to your appointment or we may not be able to do your test.
- **About your medicines:** Check with your doctor about 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 undress from the waist up and wear a short gown for privacy and comfort.

During the Test

- Your skin is prepared with a scrubbing material (like paper or gel).
- Electrodes are placed on your chest to monitor your heart rhythm. A blood pressure cuff is wrapped around your arm.
- 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 nauseous.**
- After you reach your exercise limit, and for a short time after, your heart rhythm and blood pressure are monitored.

After the Test

- You can eat and drink normally.
- You can go back to your regular medicines.
- You may drive yourself home after the test.
- Return to your normal activities (for example, you may return to work).
- The results of your test are available in a few days. Please remember: it is your doctor, not the staff, who goes over your test results with you.

More Ways to Learn

- Go to www.cpmc.org/learning.
- 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).