

Patient Education



Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

What is an Exercise Stress Echocardiogram?

An exercise stress echo is a test where pictures of the heart are taken before the highest heart rate, at the highest heart rate, and while recovering after walking on the treadmill.

The test is used to assess heart function with exercise and determine how well blood and oxygen get through the arteries to the heart muscle.

What should I do to prepare for the test?

- Many people find it uncomfortable to exercise on a full stomach so we ask that you do not have a large meal two hours before the test. You may have fluids and small snacks in this time period.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing, as well as running shoes or good walking shoes.
- Continue to take your usual medications as prescribed by your doctor.

How long is the test?

The test takes approximately 45 minutes to complete.

What will happen during the test?

- You will be given a complete explanation of the test with the time for questions and a written consent to sign before the test.
- There will be a sonographer and nurse in the room. The doctor may not be in the room; however will be available if needed at any time.
- The nurse will place electrodes on your chest – your heart rhythm and blood pressure will be monitored throughout.
- The sonographer will take images of your heart at rest, immediately after exercise, and during recovery.

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- The nurse will familiarize you with the treadmill and demonstrate how to walk on it. The speed and slope of the treadmill will change every three minutes until a target heart rate (determined by age) has been reached.

How do I get the results?

- The test will be read and reported by the internist. That report will go to your doctor.
- The results of the test will be given to you by the referring physician or your family doctor.
- The sonographer and nurse in the room are not able to provide you with test results.

Patients are to arrive 15 minutes before the appointment time.

Contact Information – Cardiovascular Ultrasound

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