

Stress Echocardiogram

A stress echocardiogram, also called a stress echo, combines a stress test with an echocardiogram. A stress echo looks at how your heart works. This test is done with exercise or medicine.

You are to have:

- An Exercise Stress Test. Bring walking shoes and loose-fitting clothing so you can move easily. You can wear a hospital gown.
- A Medicine Stress Test.

Arrive on time for your test. Plan on being here about 2 hours.

To Prepare

- Do not eat solid foods for 4 hours before your test.
- You may drink water, but do not drink liquids with caffeine. Caffeine is in regular and decaf coffee or tea, chocolate, and soft drinks.
- Ask your doctor if you should take your medicines the morning of the test. If so, take with sips of water only.
- Do not smoke for at least 4 hours before the test. Smoking can affect your test results.
- Nitroglycerin tablets or spray may be used for chest pain as needed.
- Bring a list of your medicines. Be sure to include any prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbs you take.

During the Test

Tell the doctor right away if you have shortness of breath or chest pain during the test.

- Exercise Stress Test
 - Small pads are put on your chest to check your heart. For men, chest hair may need to be shaved.
 - A blood pressure cuff is put on your arm. Your blood pressure and heart rate are checked often.
 - You exercise on a treadmill or bike.
 - The exercise gets harder every few minutes.

- When you are too tired to continue or your heart rate gets high enough, the exercise is stopped.

Medicine Stress Test

- An IV (intravenous) is put in a vein in your arm. Medicine is put in your IV every few minutes to raise your heart rate.
- Your blood pressure is checked often.
- When your heart rate gets high enough, an echo is done.

For the Echo

- You lie down on your left side on a table.
- Warm gel is put on your chest. A wand is moved across the gel to take the pictures.
- You are able to see the pictures of your heart on the screen.

After the Test

- You may return to your normal activity.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.