

EXERCISE STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM

OVERVIEW

An exercise stress echocardiogram allows your doctor to evaluate how your heart responds to exercise. You will have a transthoracic echocardiogram (TTE) before exercise (to capture your heart at rest) and immediately after exercise (to see how hard your heart works during stress). Abnormal results may suggest a coronary blood vessel obstruction, which can lead to serious health conditions.

You will be monitored closely during exercise, which is typically either walking on a treadmill or riding a specialized stationary bike.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TEST

An exercise stress echocardiogram is easy and painless. Here are a few tips to set you up for success:

- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes
- Avoid lotions and body oils on the day of the test
- Don't eat or drink anything except water for two hours before the test
- Don't drink or eat anything with caffeine for 24 hours before the test
- Bring an inhaler (if needed) to the test
- Your doctor may recommend you stop taking certain medications before the test. Some medications, such as beta blockers, can interfere with test results. As always, ask your doctor before stopping any medication.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR STRESS TEST

Electrode stickers will be placed on your chest to monitor your heart rate, rhythm and electrical activity before, during and after exercise. Your blood pressure will also be monitored throughout your test.

During your test, you may need an ultrasound enhancing agent (UEA), which allows your doctor to capture clearer pictures of your heart and structures. A nurse will insert a small needle into your vein (an IV) to administer the agent.

Your care team during the stress echocardiogram will include:

- **Cardiac Sonographer** – Performs the echocardiogram to capture images of your heart and its structures
- **Registered Nurse** – Gives you any necessary medication, monitors your vital signs and exercise tolerance
- **Cardiac Tech** – Places electrodes on your chest and takes blood pressure readings throughout the exam
- **Supervising Physician** – A cardiologist is always on-site and nearby should you have any questions or need immediate assistance.