

STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

About the Stress Echocardiogram

Your doctor has recommended you undergo a stress echocardiogram procedure. This procedure, also known as a “stress echo”, combines a treadmill exercise stress test and an echocardiogram procedure, a method of obtaining a picture of your heart as it beats.

This test is completely non-invasive, meaning all testing occurs on the surface of the skin. No tubes or IV’s will be inserted in your body. You will not need to take any medication.

This stress echo will provide your doctor with valuable information, which is routinely not available by having a treadmill test or an echocardiogram alone.

Special instructions before the test

- You may eat a light meal 2 hours before your test.
- Diabetic patients should follow their normal meal pattern.
- Please bring a list of medications you are currently taking.
- Wear comfortable clothing suitable for exercise. Low-heeled, rubber-soled shoes and slacks are recommended.
- This test takes approximately one hour.

During the Stress Echo test

Cardiology staff will examine your electrocardiogram (ECG) readings to look for signs or symptoms or changes in the ECG that may indicate blockage in your coronary arteries.

The echocardiogram procedure is performed while you are lying on an examination table, usually on your left side. A transducer, a small instrument resembling a microphone, is then moved over the chest. This transducer emits high frequency sound

waves which creates an image of your heart and how well it is pumping blood through the chambers.

What the Stress Echo test reveals

Abnormal motion of a portion of your heart muscle that may indicate blockage in the coronary arteries which supply that area. If there has been a previous heart attack, these abnormalities may be seen at rest. If an artery is partially blocked, but there has been no heart damage, motion of the heart muscle wall is usually normal at rest, but may be temporarily abnormal during and immediately following exercise.

The cardiology staff will be able to gather the most information from your study if you exercise on the treadmill as long as possible and the echocardiogram is begun immediately following the completion of exercise. For this reason, at the end of exercise, you will be asked to transfer from the treadmill machine to the examination table very quickly. Because exercise is stopped rather abruptly, you may experience momentary light-headedness immediately following exercise. This is not abnormal and should not worry you. Your blood pressure and pulse rate will be monitored continuously.

Going home

Under most circumstances, you may leave immediately after the completion of the test as long as you are feeling well. It is not necessary for you to bring someone with you to drive you home, but please feel welcome to do so if this would make you feel more comfortable.