



## Exercise Stress Test

### 1. Patient Preparation

- Nothing to eat 2 hours prior to your test. You may drink water but no caffeine such as coffee, Coke or tea.
- Take your usual medication, unless your cardiologist has advised otherwise.
- Wear comfortable clothing and rubber soled walking or running shoes that are comfortable for exercising. We suggest wearing shorts/pants as clothing from the waist up will need to be removed to gain access to your chest.
- Do not use bath oil, lotion or powder on the morning of your test. You may use deodorant.

### 2. What is an exercise stress test?

The exercise stress test measures the function of the heart, lungs and blood vessels. It is done to help diagnose blocked arteries in the heart (coronary artery disease), assess abnormal heart beats or to check the function of pacemakers.

Before the test starts, an electrocardiogram (ECG) is taken. This is a paper recording of your heart beat.

Next, your heart is exercised or 'stressed'. If you can walk easily, you can walk on the treadmill. The speed and slope of the treadmill will increase every three minutes. This makes your heart do more work. The test will be stopped if you have severe chest pain, become very tired or very short of breath (puffed). Your pulse, blood pressure and electrocardiogram are monitored during and after the test. If the doctor is worried about this, the test is stopped.

If you feel unwell you should tell staff at once.

### 3. What are the risks of this specific investigation?

There are risks and complications with this investigation. They include but are not limited to the following.

**Common risks and complications (more than 5%)** include:

- Mild angina.
- Shortness of breath.
- Musculoskeletal discomfort.

**Common risks and complications (1 – 5%)** include:

Low blood pressure.

**Rare risks and complications (less than 1%)** include:

- Fainting.
- Abnormal heart rhythm that continues for a long time. This may need an electric shock to correct.
- Build up of fluid in the lungs. You may need medication to treat this.
- Severe chest pain. This is treated with medications.
- Heart Attack
- Death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare.

