



Exercise Stress Echocardiogram / Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram

1. Patient Preparation

- Light meals on the day of your test and no heavy meals prior. You may drink water but no caffeine or stimulants such as Coffee, Coke or Tea. Do not smoke prior to your test.
- 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 a stress echocardiogram?

The stress echocardiogram measures the function of the heart, lungs and blood vessels. It is done to help diagnose blocked arteries in the heart (coronary artery disease) and also provide specific information about valvular disease and pressure in the heart and lungs.

There are two parts to this test.

First, a cardiac scientist performs an echocardiogram using an ultrasound machine. An echocardiogram checks how your heart functions when resting and ensures that no functional or structural abnormalities are present. You lie on your left side. To ensure good contact between your skin and the probe, surgical jelly is placed at several different sites on your chest. During this part of the test you may hear loud swishing noises. This is the blood flowing through the valves of your heart.

In the second part of the test, your heart is exercised or 'stressed'. If you can walk easily, you will walk on a treadmill. The speed and slope of the treadmill will increase every 3 minutes. This makes your heart do more work and you will exercise quite hard. The test will be stopped if you have chest pain, become very tired or very short of breath (puffed). When your heart is working as hard as possible, you stop exercising and quickly lie down on the bed. More echocardiogram pictures are taken; this can be difficult for some people as you may be asked to hold your breath briefly to obtain the images.

If you have difficulty walking, the doctor may decide to use a drug called 'Dobutamine'. This drug copies the effect of exercise on the heart and makes the heart work faster and harder. A small needle or cannula is inserted into your hand or arm and the Dobutamine is given slowly through this

needle over the next twenty minutes. You will be monitored closely through the duration of the test.

If you feel unwell you should tell staff at once.

3. What are the risks of this specific procedure?

In recommending this procedure your doctor has balanced the benefits and risks of the procedure against the benefits and risks of not proceeding. Your doctor believes there is a net benefit to you going ahead.

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

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

- Abnormal heartbeat that usually settles without treatment.
- Build up of fluid in the lungs. You may need medication to treat this.
- Chest pain. This is treated with medications.
- Heart attack.
- Death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare.

Side effects of Dobutamine:

You may suffer:

- Headache, nausea, vomiting, restlessness, muscle cramps or weakness, chest pain, shortness of breath (feeling puffed), dizziness, palpitations and rash.
- Advisable you are driven to this appointment.



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