Stress Echocardiogram

A stress echocardiogram, also called a stress echo, combines 2 tests, a stress test and an echocardiogram. A stress echo looks at how your heart works.

The stress test will be done with either 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.
- If you are to take your medicines the morning of the test, take them 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. You will have an echocardiogram before and after the stress test.

**For the echocardiogram:**

- You will 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.

**For the stress 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 and then an echo is done.

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.

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.