

# 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.**