



## What is a Stress Echocardiogram Test?

An exercise echocardiogram (or "echo") is a test that combines an ultrasound study of the heart with an exercise test. It lets the doctor see your heart function when it is made to work harder. The exercise echo helps to diagnose coronary heart disease.

## Why does my doctor want me to have this test?

Your doctor may order this test:

1. If you have been having chest pain or shortness of breath. Your doctor will want to know if these symptoms are because of your heart.
2. If you are about to have surgery, a stress test can help the doctor to see if your heart is strong enough to handle the stress of surgery.

## How do I prepare for the test?

You may have a light meal (such as toast or cereal, or a half sandwich with juice or milk) about 2-3 hours before the test.

Some blood pressure medicines (like beta blockers) should **not** be taken 24 hours before the test. Ask your doctor if you need to stop taking a medicine before the test.

## What happens during the exam?

First, when you come to the Cardiology Department for your test we will ask you questions about your health history. After we explain the test to you, we will ask you to sign consent before the test is started.

Next we will place EKG patches on your chest. The patches are attached to small wires, which are connected to a machine. This lets the doctor watch your heart rate and rhythm during the stress test.

Once the doctor is present, you will get on the treadmill and start walking until you reach your target heart rate. When you reach that target heart rate, the treadmill is stopped and you quickly get into bed lying on your left side. An echo tech will take sound pictures of your heart. The doctor is able to tell how well your heart is working.

## What are the possible side effects?

You will not be alone during the test. If you develop any of these symptoms make sure you tell the nurse/doctor in the test with you.

- Chest Pain
- Lightheaded or dizzy
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath

## How long does the test take?

The total time in the Cardiology Department is about 2 hours.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Cardiology Department at 756-3560.