



Exercise Stress Test

An exercise stress test assesses how your heart responds to physical activity. You will usually walk on a treadmill while your heart rhythm, blood pressure and symptoms are monitored. The treadmill starts slowly and then gradually becomes faster and steeper.

The test continues until you reach your maximum level of exercise, or until it needs to be stopped for symptoms or safety reasons.

Please tell staff immediately if you develop chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, palpitations or feel unwell during the test.

If you are unable to exercise, your doctor may recommend a medication stress test instead.

What the Test Can Show

An exercise stress test can help identify signs of reduced blood flow to the heart during exercise, which may suggest significant narrowing of the coronary arteries.

The test is useful, but it is not perfect. It correctly detects significant coronary artery narrowing in about 65–70% of cases and correctly reassures patients without significant narrowing in about 60% of cases.

In some patients, a stress echocardiogram may be recommended instead. This test includes ultrasound images of the heart before and after exercise and is generally more accurate than a standard exercise stress test.

Your result will be interpreted together with your symptoms, medical history, ECG and other test findings.