



Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

An exercise stress echocardiogram is an ultrasound test that shows how your heart works before and after exercise.

You will walk on a treadmill while your heart rhythm, blood pressure and symptoms are monitored. The treadmill will gradually become faster and steeper. Ultrasound pictures of your heart are taken before exercise and again immediately after you stop.

After exercise, you will be asked to return quickly to the examination bed so the final ultrasound images can be taken while your heart rate is still high.

This test helps the cardiologist assess how your heart muscle and valves respond to exercise and whether there are signs of reduced blood flow to the heart.

Before the Test

Before the test, you will have an electrocardiogram (ECG), blood pressure check and a resting heart ultrasound. Please bring your medication list, or your medications, with you.

Some heart medications, such as beta-blockers, may need to be withheld before the test. This will be discussed with you, as the decision depends on your individual medical condition.

Please tell staff immediately if you develop chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, palpitations or feel unwell. The test may be stopped at any time if needed for your safety.

If you are unable to exercise, a medication stress test may be arranged instead.

What the Results Can and Cannot Show

The test can show whether there are signs that blood flow to the heart muscle may be reduced during exercise.

It does not measure the exact percentage of narrowing in the coronary arteries. If this information is needed, your doctor may recommend another test, such as computed tomography coronary angiography (CTCA) or invasive coronary angiography.

Risks

The test is generally safe. Rare serious risks include heart attack, approximately 1 in 5,000 tests, and death, approximately 1 in 10,000 tests. You will be asked to consent to these risks before the test.