

CURE CARDIOVASCULAR CONSULTANTS

EXERCISE ECHOCARDIOGRAM TEST (STRESS ECHO)

Definition: An exercise echocardiogram (also known as a stress echo) is a test that combines an ultrasound study of the heart with an exercise test. The test allows the doctor to learn how the heart functions when it has to work harder. This test is useful in diagnosing heart problems, such as coronary artery disease (blockages in the coronary arteries).

Before the Test:

- You should allow an hour to an hour and a half for this test.
- Wear or bring comfortable attire and walking/running shoes.
- Make your last meal light and without tea, coffee or alcohol.
- Stop taking any blood pressure/ heart medications 24 hours prior to testing.
- Before the test, you will be given an explanation of the test and you will be asked to sign a consent form. Feel free to ask any questions about the procedure.
- Several areas on your chest and shoulders will be cleansed with alcohol to prepare the skin for the electrodes (small sticky patches). Men may need to have areas of their chest shaved, to ensure that the electrodes stay in place.

During The Test:

- The test is divided into three parts. First, a resting echocardiogram is performed. Next, you will walk on a treadmill, then another echocardiogram is performed while your heart is still beating rapidly after exercise.
- Resting echocardiogram - You will be asked to lie on an exam table. To improve the quality of the pictures, a colorless gel is applied to the area of the chest when the transducer will be placed. Pictures of your heart are recorded on videotape.
- Exercise test - You will walk slowly in place on a treadmill, on which the speed is increased to a faster pace and is then tilted to produce the effect of going up a small hill.
- The technician will stop the test when you reach your peak heart rate, when you get too tired, or have significant symptoms.
- After exercise echocardiogram - You will be asked to very rapidly return to the examining table, and lie once again on your left side. The sonographer will then record a second set of images while your heart is still beating rapidly. The CCT doctor can then compare the two sets of images. This will be before and after exercise side by side to see how your heart responds to the stress of exercise.

After The Test:

- The doctor conducting the test can give you results before you leave. A complete interpretation will be sent to your referring physician.
- If the test is abnormal or inconclusive, then additional tests may be ordered.
- The information gained from the stress echo helps your doctor make an accurate diagnosis and develop a treatment plan that is best for you.

If you have any questions before your test please feel free to call our staff at **(760) 323-2174**.