

If you have any questions, ask your physician.

Stress Echocardiogram

A stress echocardiogram (echo) is a test used to detect significant coronary artery disease (CAD), a blockage of blood flow to the heart. It tests your heart's reaction during periods of rest and exercise. The echocardiogram uses high-frequency sound waves (ultrasound) to look at how the various parts of the heart work. If significant CAD is present, the stress echo often will note changes in how the heart muscle contracts. The stress echo combines an echocardiogram with the standard treadmill stress test. This provides a more complete picture of how your heart works. Plan to spend 1 to 2 hours at your appointment for this test.

Before the test

- Do not eat or drink for 3 hours before the test. Take your usual medication with small sips of water unless your physician tells you otherwise.
- Be sure to take your blood pressure medication.
- Do not put lotion or powder on your body the morning of the exam.
- Wear a comfortable, loose-fitting, 2-piece outfit and exercise shoes.

Plan to arrive 15 to 30 minutes before your appointment. Go to the reception desk on the 8th floor of Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street.

Also be sure to bring:

- A list of your allergies
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information and card
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, please bring your parking ticket with you. You can get your ticket validated at the Customer Service Desk on the 1st or 2nd floors of Feinberg and Galter pavilions or the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

Upon arrival

- We will explain the test to you, including the benefits and risks. We will then ask you to consent to the test.
- To prepare for the test, we will ask you to undress from the waist up and change into a hospital gown. (You may not wear a bra since it will interfere with our ability to perform the echocardiogram.)

During the test

We will place electrodes on your chest to record an electrocardiogram (ECG) during the test. If necessary, we may need to shave the chest area so the electrodes will stick well. You will lie down on a special exam bed where an echocardiogram will be done before you start the treadmill exercise. We will place a small transducer (probe) coated with a light gel on your chest to obtain images of your heart. We will compare the pictures, recorded on videotape, to images obtained right after exercise.

You then will exercise on a treadmill. We will increase the rate and incline every 3 minutes. We will check your blood pressure every 3 minutes during and after exercise. It is important to walk on the treadmill long enough to show the heart's reaction to varied amounts of work.

Be aware that at the end of the exercise portion of the test, the treadmill will stop abruptly. We will help you move back to the exam bed quickly to obtain the after-exercise echocardiogram. This is important for a complete test.

After the test

We will remove the electrodes and gel from your chest, and you will get dressed. Showers are available if you wish to take one. You may resume your regular diet.