

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 shows how your heart works during periods of rest and exercise.

If you have any questions,
talk with your physician.

The echocardiogram uses high-frequency sound waves (ultrasound) to look at how the different parts of the heart work.

If significant CAD is present, the stress echo will often show changes in how the heart muscle contracts. The stress echo combines an echocardiogram with the standard treadmill stress test. This provides a more detailed 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. 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, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Service Desks on the 1st or 2nd floors of Feinberg and Galter pavilions or the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.



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)

Upon arrival

The care team will explain the test to you, including the benefits and risks. They will then ask you to consent to the test.

You will need to undress from the waist up and put on a hospital gown. You may not wear a bra since it will interfere with echocardiogram equipment.

During the test

The care team will put electrodes on your chest to record an electrocardiogram (ECG) during the test. If necessary, they may shave the chest area so the electrodes will stick well.

You will have an echocardiogram before and after the treadmill exercises. They will compare the before and after pictures recorded on videotape. For the echocardiogram, you will lie down on a special exam bed. They will put a small transducer (probe) coated with a light gel on your chest to get images of your heart.

You then will exercise on a treadmill. They will increase the rate and incline every 3 minutes. They 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 different levels of work.

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



After the test

The care team will remove the electrodes and gel from your chest, and you will get dressed. Showers are available if you want to take one. You may go back to your regular diet.

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