

WHAT IS A STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM?

Why do I need a Stress Echo?

A stress echo is used to test for cardiovascular disease. The echo uses sound waves to take moving pictures of your heart. This is not surgery and does not hurt. An echo done in combination with a treadmill test will show the doctor how your heart handles work or "stress".

What happens during the test?

You will be hooked up with an electrocardiogram (EKG). This will continuously monitor your heart rate and rhythm during the test. A cardiac technician will get a resting EKG and blood pressure.

An echo technician will take the ultrasound pictures. You will be lying on your left side for this, and the technician will put a special gel on your chest. Special probes are used to take pictures of your heart walls and valves.

After your echo pictures are done, the cardiac technician will find your doctor and bring them into the room. With the doctor present, you will walk in place on the treadmill. The speed and slope of the hill will change at set intervals. The doctor will determine when the treadmill test is done based on your heart rate and how you are feeling.

Immediately after the treadmill test, you will be led back to the table and will lay back on your left side. The echo technician will repeat some of the pictures while your heart is still beating fast from exercise. The doctor will look at the EKG and pictures and give you the results of your test before you leave.

What will the test show?

- The size and shape of your heart.
- How well your heart is working overall and how it responds to exercise.
- If a wall or section of your heart is weak or not working correctly.
- If you have any problems with your heart valves.
- If you have a blood clot in your heart.

How do I prepare for the test?

Come dressed to exercise, including walking shoes. Do NOT wear lotion or body oil on your upper body. A light meal is OK 1-2 hours prior to the test. Some water is OK. Take all regular medications except the following (unless your doctor instructs you otherwise):

Atenolol (Tenormin)

Metoprolol (Toprol, Lopressor)

Nadolol (Corgard)

Propranolol (Inderal)

Carvediolol (Coreg)

Bystolic

* or any other Beta Blockers