

Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram

General Information

Your doctor wants you to have a dobutamine stress echocardiogram (or echo) to see how well your heart is working during exercise.

The test is used for people who cannot exercise on a treadmill. You will be given dobutamine, a medicine that makes your heart beat faster and contract stronger while you lie in bed. Your heart will be exercising but your body will not.

An ultrasound transducer makes and sends the sound waves. As it is moved over your chest, pictures of your heart walls and valves reflect part of the sound waves back to the transducer. This makes the images of your heart.

The images appear on a computer screen and are recorded digitally on the computer. The pictures will show how your heart wall muscle reacts as your heart rate increases.

This test can help the cardiologist (heart doctor) find heart disease and help determine if you need treatment.

Your Appointment

Hospital: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

Plan to spend at least
_____ minutes / hours at the facility.

Phone number:

If you need to cancel or reschedule, please call at least 24 hours before your scheduled appointment.

Before the Procedure

- Tell your doctor if you:
 - have an allergy to latex
 - are pregnant
 - have kidney disease
 - **have diabetes** (Ask for an early morning appointment and talk with the health care provider who manages your diabetes about your medicine needs.)
 - take any medicines. Check with your doctor to see if you have special medicine instructions.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke 4 hours before the test.

(over)

During the Procedure

- You will undress to your waist and wear a hospital gown.
- Members of your health care team (such as a cardiac technologist, sonographer, registered nurse, or all) will be with you during the entire test.
- Your blood pressure will be checked often. The blood pressure cuff will be left in place for regular checks during the procedure.
- The nurse or technician will insert a small intravenous (IV) catheter into an arm or hand vein. The dobutamine will be given through the catheter.
- The cardiac technologist or nurse will attach 10 adhesive electrodes (patches) to your chest. The electrodes are connected to the electrocardiogram (ECG) monitor, which will record your heartbeats.
- You will lie on your left side so the sonographer can get images of your heart.
- The room will be darkened during the echo imaging.
- A nurse will give you the dobutamine in 4 or 5 stages.
 - Each stage will last 3 to 5 minutes.
 - With each stage, the nurse will increase the amount of dobutamine.
 - You will feel your heart beat faster and harder. You may also feel nervous or jittery. This is normal.
 - You may receive extra medicine to increase your heart rate.

- During each stage, your blood pressure will be checked, your echo images will be recorded, and you will be asked how you feel.
- You may need a contrast if the first echo images are not clear. The contrast helps make the echo images more clear.
- The test will end when your heart reaches a target rate or if you have symptoms including chest pain (angina), lightheadedness or a new abnormality on the ECG.

After the Procedure

- Your heart will need 10 to 15 minutes to return to a normal heart rate. You may receive medicine to help your heart return to its normal rate.
- Your blood pressure and heart rhythm will be watched until you feel like you did before the test.
- The IV catheter will be removed.
- You may return to your normal activities, unless your doctor gives you other directions.
- The cardiologist will look at your test information and give the results to your regular health care provider.
- Your doctor will get the test results. Please call his or her office 5 to 7 business days after the test for the results.