

Treadmill Test (Stress EKG)

General Information

A treadmill test, or stress electro-cardiogram, helps your doctor see how well your heart is working during exercise. Your heart works harder to pump blood during exercise.

The test will show if your heart muscle has good blood supply.

The treadmill stress test takes about 1 hour to complete, including preparation time.

Before the Test

- Ask your doctor ahead of time if you should take your usual medicines the day of the test, especially if you have diabetes.
- Do not eat or drink anything 4 hours before the test.
- Do not smoke after midnight or on the day of the test.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing (slacks and a top) and walking shoes.
- Tell the technician if you are pregnant.

During the Test

- The technician will put electrocardiogram (EKG) patches on your chest to monitor your heart rate.
- Your blood pressure will be checked, and the cuff will be left in place for regular blood pressure checks during the test.
- You will then walk in place on a treadmill.
- Every 3 minutes, the treadmill will gradually increase in speed and tilt upward, like a small hill.
- During the test, you will be asked to report any chest pain, unusual shortness of breath, increased fatigue, leg pain, dizziness or if you feel faint.
- You will be told to stop when you reach your maximum level of exercise.

After the Test

- Your blood pressure and heart rate will be monitored until your heartbeat returns to normal.
- Your doctor will talk with you about your test results.
- You may return to your normal activities.

Call your doctor if you have any questions about the exam or how to prepare for it.