

# Stress Echocardiogram (Exercise)

A Stress Echo, is a specialised ultrasound test to examine the effect of exercise on your heart. A treadmill is used to increase heart rate. An imaging agent (safe and usually not felt) will be given to ensure the clearest pictures of your heart are obtained. It is important to let the technician know before the test if you have any known allergies or if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

## Preparation

These points must be followed prior to a Stress Echo:

- No food or cigarettes 2 hours before the test. Fluids can be consumed up to 30 minutes before your test.
- Please bring a list of your current medications. Ask your doctor if you should take (or stop) your regular medication prior to your stress echo.
- Wear comfortable clothing and appropriate footwear for exercise, as you will be walking on a treadmill.
- Clothing from the waist up needs to be removed to gain access to the chest. A hospital gown is then worn for the test. Ladies, for ease, we suggest wearing a two-piece outfit in preference to a dress.

## Test Duration

Allow approximately 60 to 90 minutes for your Stress Echo appointment.

## Medicare Rebate Available

Yes

## Procedure

After checking your height and weight, a small needle will be inserted into a vein, usually on the inside of your elbow or the back of your hand. Following preparation of the skin, ECG leads will be placed on your chest, which monitor your heart rate and rhythm throughout the examination. Your blood pressure will be checked and then ultrasound images of your heart at rest will be taken whilst you are lying on your left side.

A treadmill is used for the exercise part of the test. There are handrails to hold onto for balance. Your blood pressure will be checked prior to walking, and during each stage of exercise. The treadmill starts slowly and increases in speed and incline every 3 minutes. Throughout the test staff will monitor how you feel as well as any symptoms experienced. The goal is for you to walk on the treadmill as long as you can however you will not be required to walk faster than you are capable of.

When the treadmill stops, you will be assisted back to the bed to take more images of your heart.

During recovery your heart rate, ECG and blood pressure will be monitored. On completion of the test, shower facilities are available for your convenience. We then ask you to remain in the comfort of our clinic for 15-20 minutes before leaving.

## Results

Your report will be sent directly to your referring doctor, usually within 24 hours. You do not need to wait for the report or any films, videos or CDs.