Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

What is an Exercise Stress Echocardiogram?

An Exercise Stress Echocardiogram test checks how well your heart works when you exercise. It combines walking on a treadmill or cycling on a bike with taking pictures of your heart using ultrasound before and after you finish exercising.

These pictures are taken during a test called an echocardiogram (also known as TTE or echo). A specially trained person called a Cardiac Sonographer does this test. They use a device that sends sound waves or ultra sound to take pictures of your heart. These images help doctors see how well your heart muscle, valves and chambers are working and if they are normal size.

What do I expect of the test?

This test takes place in the Diagnostic Cardiology Department at Bendigo Hospital.
Clinic C - Level 1.

Your heart rate and blood pressure will be checked throughout the test using monitors that will be placed on your body. You will be asked to take off your clothing from the waist up and lie on a bed. A Cardiac Sonographer will use a small device called an ultrasound transducer on your chest to take pictures of your heart before you start exercising.

Next you will walk on a treadmill. Every three minutes it will get a little faster and steeper. You'll keep walking as long as you can so your heart rate increases. If you feel sick or uncomfortable at any time, let the staff know right away.

After you finish walking, the sonographer will take more pictures of your heart.

A doctor will be with you during the test, and will usually explain the results before you leave.

The whole test will take about 45 minutes.

Why do I need an Exercise Stress Echocardiogram?

- See how well your heart handles exercise and physical activity
- Check how well your heart and heart valves are working
- Look for signs of heart problems, especially if you have symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath or a heart murmur
- Find out if you are at risk of having coronary artery disease (a condition where the blood vessels in your heart become narrowed or blocked).

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- Please let our staff know if you have diabetes or any other health problems that might make it hard for you to exercise or finish the test.
- Please let the staff know before you arrive for the test if you use a walking aid or have trouble walking more than one block without pain.

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- Some medications can affect the results of this test. Please tell us all the medications you take. You may be asked to stop taking certain medications for up to 48 hours before the test. We will tell you if this applies to you when we book your appointment. If you are unsure, talk to your local doctor.
- If you use an inhaler for breathing problems, please bring it with you
- Please wear a **two-piece outfit** such as a button-up shirt and pants
- Wear **comfortable walking shoes**
- Please do not wear talc, body lotion or neck chains on the day of the test
- You will need somebody to drive you home after the test.

When does my doctor get my results?

A report with the results of your test will be written and sent to your referring doctor 5-7 working days from your test date.

If you have any further questions or concerns about your upcoming Exercise Stress Echocardiogram, please discuss with your GP or phone the Diagnostic Cardiology Department

References

- MonashHeart.org.au - Heartfoundation.org.au - bendigohealth.org.au

Diagnostic Cardiology Department

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