

What is an exercise stress echocardiogram test?

An exercise stress echocardiogram is performed to learn about the size, shape, and motion of the heart and heart valves, and whether the heart receives enough blood during exercise or when it is stressed. During the test, exercise increases the heart rate and the amount of blood and oxygen the heart needs to function. Sound waves are used to make pictures of the heart before and after the exercise.

Pre-Registration and Testing Location

Plan to arrive 20 minutes before the scheduled time of your test. Bring your hospital and insurance cards with you. Check in at the front desk in main lobby. Exercise Stress Echocardiograms are performed at:

MISH

11217 Lakeview Ave., Lenexa Kansas 66219
913-322-7408

Before the Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

- Notify the physician of all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) and herbal supplements that you are taking.
- Your physician may instruct you to stop or taper certain medications before your stress test. You should check with your physician if any medications should be stopped before this test. **IMPORTANT.**
- You are asked to:
 - fast for 4 hours before the procedure.
 - stop smoking for 4 hours before the procedure
 - stop caffeine for 4 hours before the procedure
- If you are pregnant or suspect that you may be pregnant, you should notify your physician.
- Notify the physician if you have a pacemaker or defibrillator.
- Wear flat shoes with rubber soles or sneakers that are comfortable for walking and loose-fitting pants or shorts. Women should wear a short-sleeved top that fastens in the front for ease of attaching the ECG electrodes to the chest.
- The area(s) where the electrodes are to be placed may be shaved.
- If you take insulin, check to find out what amount of insulin to take on the day of the exam.



During the Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

The first part of the test is usually performed in a darkened room. You will be asked to lie on your back, your left side and/or sit up. A lubricating gel will be applied to your skin over the heart area. A small smooth instrument (called a transducer) will be moved and/or tilted gently across your chest in various positions during the exam. The echo transducer picks up the sound waves from your heart and a live image of your heart is displayed on a TV monitor.

At times during the exam you will hear a "swishing" sound (called Doppler) coming from the machine. This is the blood flow as it moves through the heart valves. After the echo is completed, you will be asked to walk on a motorized treadmill. The speed and incline of the treadmill will be gradually increased. Once your maximum heart rate is achieved you will lie down again and repeat images will be taken with the echo machine. There is no pain or discomfort during the test. Test time is approximately 45-60 minutes.

- You will be asked to remove any jewelry or other objects that may interfere with the procedure.
- You will be asked to open your blouse or shirt in the front (men may be asked to remove their shirts).
- If your chest, arms, or legs are very hairy, the technician may shave small patches of hairs needed so that the electrodes will stick to skin. Electrodes will then be attached to your chest, arms, and legs.
- A blood pressure cuff will be attached to your arm while you are sitting down. Initial, or baseline, ECG and blood pressure readings will be taken while you are lying or sitting down and standing up.
- If you begin to have any chest pain, dizziness, lightheadedness, extreme shortness of breath, nausea, headache, leg pains, or other symptoms during exercise notify the nurse or physician.
- The exercise will end once you have reached a target heart rate. The test may also be stopped if you develop severe symptoms such as chest pain, dizziness, nausea, severe shortness of breath, severe fatigue, or an abnormally elevated blood pressure or for abnormal findings on the ECG.