

What is an exercise stress test?

An exercise stress test is one of the simplest and fastest procedures used to evaluate the heart and its response to stress or exercise. The electrical activity of the heart is measured, interpreted, and monitored. The ECG is monitored while a person is exercising on a treadmill.

Pre-Registration and Testing Location

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

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

Before Your Exercise Stress Test

- Your physician may instruct you to stop or taper certain medications (heart and lung meds usually) before your stress test. Please 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 before the test.
- 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.
- Please be aware, the areas where the electrodes will need to be placed may be shaved.

During The Procedure

- 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), or you may be asked to wear a hospital gown.
- 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.
- You will be instructed on how to walk on the treadmill. You will be told to let the technician, or physician know if you begin to have any chest pain, dizziness, lightheadedness, extreme shortness of breath, nausea, headache, leg pains, or other symptoms during exercise.
- You will begin to exercise at a minimal level. The intensity of the exercise will be gradually increased on the treadmill by increasing the incline and speed of the treadmill every few minutes.
- ECG, blood pressure and oxygenation readings will be taken periodically during the exercise to measure how well your heart and body are responding to the exercise.
- 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.
- Once you have reached your target heart rate, the rate of exercise will be slowed for a "cool down" period to help avoid any nausea or cramping from sudden stopping of exercise.
- You will sit in a chair and your ECG and blood pressure will be monitored until they return to normal or near-normal. This may take 10 to 20 minutes.



After the Procedure

- You should be able to resume your normal diet and activities, unless your physician instructs you differently.
- Generally, there is no special care following an exercise ECG.
- Notify your physician if you develop any signs or symptoms you had prior to the test (e.g., chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or fainting).