

## Why do I need this test?

A treadmill stress echocardiogram (or “echo”) is a test that combines an ultrasound study of the heart with a stress test. It allows doctors to learn how the heart functions when it is made to work harder. The most common reasons for doing this exam are:

- To check for any major blockage of blood flow to the heart muscle.
- To help your doctor check your heart before any surgery you may need.

## What happens before the test?

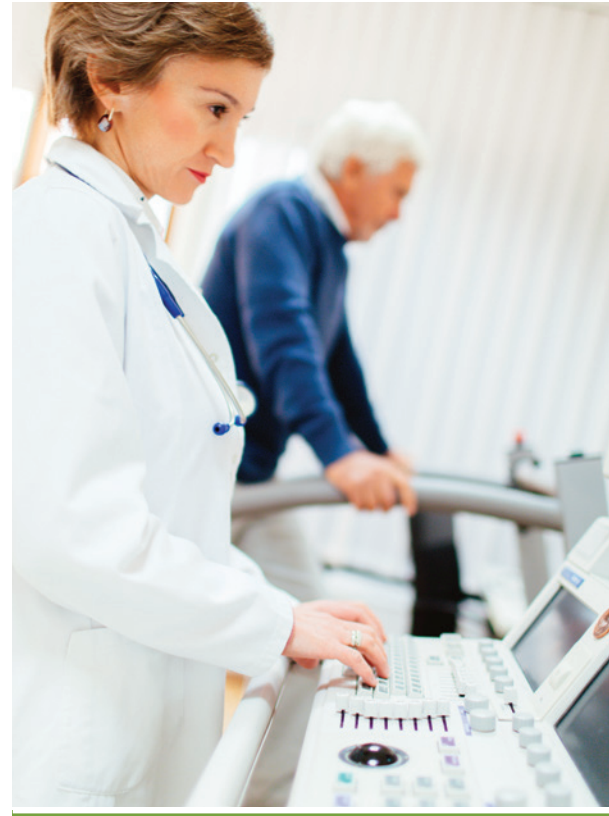
- Do not eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- You may take your medications with a sip of water, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- If you are currently taking any heart medications, check with your doctor. He or she *may* ask you to stop certain medications a day or two before the test, including beta blockers and calcium channel blockers. This can help you get more accurate test results.
- **Report to the clinic 15 minutes prior to the procedure.**
- Plan to be at the clinic for up to 1 hour.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothes for exercise.

## Before the stress portion of the exam

A staff member will explain the procedure.

## What happens during the test?

- You will have electrodes attached to your chest to monitor your electrocardiogram (EKG) during the test.
- You will have a resting EKG, blood pressure and echo study done.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side. The technologist will use a hand-held device called a transducer to send and receive ultrasound signals. A computer then calculates the travel times of the waves to and from the heart and constructs an image of the heart onto a monitor. *An echo does not require the use of radiation to produce a very reliable image, making the test safe and painless.*
- You will then be asked to walk on the treadmill. The treadmill will increase your heart rate. The doctor or technician will frequently check your heart monitor, blood pressure and ask how you are feeling.
- Once you meet your target heart rate, you will have another echo study done.



## What happens after the test?

- The electrodes will be taken off your chest when you feel rested.
- We will continue to monitor your heart rate and blood pressure until you are back to your starting values.
- There are no restrictions or limitations after your test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. You may resume your usual diet, fluids, medications and activity.