

# Stress Test of the Heart

A stress test is also called an exercise, heart or cardiac stress test. This test checks how your heart works under stress and can show if there is blockage in your blood vessels. You will either be given medicine, or you will exercise on a treadmill or an exercise bike.

Your doctor has scheduled you for a stress test with:

- Medicine
- Exercise

**Arrive on time for your test.** The test takes about 1 hour. Plan on being here about 2 hours.

## To Prepare

- For the stress test with exercise, bring walking shoes and loose-fitting clothing so you can move easily. You can wear a hospital gown.
- Do not eat solid foods for 4 hours before your test.
- You may drink water, but do not drink liquids with caffeine. Caffeine is in regular and decaf coffee, tea, chocolate and soft drinks.
- If you are to take your medicines the morning of the test, take them with sips of water only.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco for at least 4 hours before your test. Smoking can affect your test results.
- Nitroglycerin tablets or spray may be used for chest pain as needed.
- Bring a list of your medicines. Be sure to include any prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbs you take.

## During the Test

- You are asked to change into your exercise clothes or a hospital gown.
- Small pads are put on your chest to check your heart rate. For men, chest hair may need to be shaved.
- A blood pressure cuff is put on your arm. Your blood pressure and heart rate are checked often.
- **Tell the staff right away** if you have any shortness of breath or chest pain.

### For a Stress Test with Medicine:

- › An IV (intravenous) is put in a vein in your arm.
- › The medicine that stresses your heart is put into your IV.
- › When a certain heart rate is reached, the test ends.

**□ For a Stress Test with Exercise:**

- You exercise by walking on a treadmill or riding an exercise bike.
- The exercise gets harder every few minutes.
- When you are too tired or a certain heart rate is reached, the test ends.

**After the Test**

- You are asked to sit and rest a few minutes.
- When you go home, you may return to your normal activity.
- Test results are sent to your doctor. Your doctor will share the results with you.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**