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## Exercise Stress Test

### What is an Exercise Stress Test?

An Exercise Stress Test is used to screen for the effects of exercise on your heart.

### How is the test performed?

A technologist will place 10 stickers called electrodes on your chest. These are attached to an ECG monitor that records the electrical activity of your heart during the test.

You will walk on a treadmill. Roughly every 3 minutes, you will be asked to walk faster and on a slightly greater incline. It will feel like walking quickly or jogging up a slight hill.

While you exercise, the activity of your heart is measured with an electrocardiogram (ECG). Blood pressure readings are also taken.

The test continues until:

- You reach a target heart rate
- You develop chest pain or an excessive change in blood pressure
- ECG changes show that your heart muscle is not getting enough oxygen
- You are too tired, or are experiencing other symptoms (shortness of breath, or leg pain) that keep you from continuing

### How do I prepare for this test?

Please bring a list of your current medications.

Please refrain from eating, smoking, or drinking beverages containing caffeine or alcohol for **2 hours** prior to the test. Wear comfortable shoes and loose clothing suitable for exercise. The electrodes will be placed on your chest, so you will be required to remove all clothing from the waist up. A gown will be supplied to allow you to cover up.



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### **How will the test feel?**

Electrodes (small conductive stickers) will be placed on your chest to measure your heart rate and rhythm. Preparation for these stickers involves wiping the area down with alcohol and using a small patch of sandpaper to lightly brush off any soap or cream. This may cause some mild burning or tingling.

A blood pressure cuff on your upper arm will be inflated every 3-5 minutes which may feel tight.

While walking on the treadmill, some patients experience:

- Chest discomfort
- Dizziness
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Leg discomfort

If at any time you feel excessive discomfort, the test will be terminated.

### **Why did my doctor ask for this test?**

Reasons why an exercise stress test may be performed include, but are not limited to:

- New or worsening chest pain or shortness of breath with or without exercise
- Angina that is becoming more severe or more frequent
- A recent heart attack
- To evaluate a stent or heart bypass surgery
- To identify heart rhythm changes that may occur during exercise
- To further test for a heart valve problem
- Have a strong family history of heart disease