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## Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram

### What is a Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram?

Stress echocardiography is a test that uses ultrasound imaging to show how well your heart muscles are working to pump blood to your body when your heart rate is increased. This test is mainly used to detect a decrease in blood flow to the heart muscles caused by coronary artery disease. Rather than maneuvering yourself on a treadmill, your heart rate will be increased with a drug called Dobutamine.

### How is the test performed?

A small intravenous (IV) needle will be inserted into your forearm or hand to allow delivery of Dobutamine. This will increase your heart rate over a period of approximately 20 minutes. You will be lying down on your left side throughout this test.

A resting echocardiogram will be done first. While you lie on your left side, a small device called a transducer is held against your chest. A special gel is used to help the ultrasound waves get to your heart to make an image.

Your heart rate and rhythm (ECG), and blood pressure will be monitored throughout the entire procedure.

More echocardiogram images will be taken at different stages throughout the exam, while your heart reaches its maximum. These images will show whether any parts of the heart muscle are not functioning properly when your heart rate is increased. This could be a sign that part of the heart may not be receiving enough blood or oxygen due to narrowed or blocked arteries.

### How do I prepare for the test?

You may eat a light meal or snack before this test.

Please **stop all Beta-blockers for 48 hours prior to testing**. These are medications which keep your heart rate controlled. If you are unsure if you are taking Beta-blockers, please check with your doctor.



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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.

The ultrasound transducer on the chest may be applied with slight pressure which may cause discomfort for some patients.

Sometimes, people experience some of the following during the test:

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Restlessness
- Muscle cramps or weakness
- Chest discomfort or pain
- Dizziness
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Rash or skin redness
- Bruising at the site of the IV needle.

These side effects should subside once the Dobutamine infusion is stopped. If at any time you feel excessive discomfort, the test will be terminated.

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

Your doctor is concerned that your heart muscle may not be getting enough blood flow and/or oxygen when it is under stress (working hard). They may have ordered this test if you:

- Have new symptoms of angina or chest pain
- Have angina that is getting worse
- Have recently had a heart attack
- Have had a stress test with unclear results
- Have heart valve problems

The results of this test can help your doctor:

- Determine how well a heart treatment is working, or change treatment if needed
- Determine how well your heart is pumping
- Diagnose coronary artery disease