

DANBURY HOSPITAL

Patient Education Handout

What is an Exercise Stress Test with Cardiolite?

What is an exercise stress test with Cardiolite and why is this test ordered?

A stress test is performed to evaluate the blood supply and function of the heart. It is useful in detecting how adequate the blood supply is to the heart muscle. This is done both at rest and with exercise.

This test might be ordered if you have been experiencing symptoms such as:

- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Difficulty breathing
- Palpitations

It is frequently ordered following a heart attack, angioplasty or open heart surgery to assess your hearts' recovery. In addition, it is often ordered prior to starting cardiac rehabilitation. Your physician has ordered an exercise Stress Test for you if you are able to walk and run on a treadmill.

Cardiolite is a nuclear isotope, which the nuclear technologist will administer through an intravenous line during the procedure. This isotope is a "tracer" or agent that helps the cardiology staff to visualize the heart with a special nuclear camera. Side effects from Cardiolite are very rare. Some people experience a metallic taste initially when the isotope is given, but this goes away quickly.

How long will this test take?

Plan to be at the testing area for about three (3) hours.

Is there any special preparation prior to the test?

Do not eat or drink anything with caffeine in it for 24 hours prior to the test. Do not eat or smoke for at least three hours before your test. Drinking *only* water before the test is permitted. Please note that if you have difficult veins we encourage

you to increase your water intake prior to the test. Take all of your regular medications before the test unless directed otherwise by your doctor.

If you are a diabetic, test your blood sugar before you arrive at the testing area; you should have a light meal three hours before the test. Exercise will tend to lower your blood sugar. You are encouraged to bring your blood sugar meter with you.

Bring a current list of all your medications with you. Wear comfortable well-fitting shoes; sneakers are recommended. Clothing should be loose fitting and comfortable for exercise. It is recommended that women wear a bra.

What can I expect on the day of the test?

- After you have arrived and registered for your test, a brief medical history will be conducted, including the medications you are presently taking.
- Then an intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into your hand or arm.
- A Nuclear Technologist will then administer the Cardiolite through your IV.
- You will then have about a 45 minute wait to allow time for the Cardiolite to circulate through your blood stream.
- You will then be escorted from the waiting room to the camera for your first set of pictures. These first pictures are known as, "Resting Pictures". You will lie under the camera for about 15 minutes with your arms above your head, and remain motionless. If you are unable to perform this task make the technologist aware so accommodations may be made.
- Following the resting pictures, you will be escorted to the stress testing room. Ten (10) sticky tabs will be placed to your chest for the electrocardiogram, and a blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm.

- The technologist will connect into the IV to administer a saline solution.
- You will be assisted to the treadmill for the exercise portion of the test. The treadmill will begin slowly and will have a slight elevation. The speed and elevation of the treadmill will increase every three minutes.
- You will continue to walk/run on the treadmill for as long as you are able or until it is determined you should stop. **It is important that you report symptoms of chest discomfort, difficulty breathing, dizziness, weakness and/or fatigue.**
- Cardiolite is injected through the intravenous line about one minute prior to the end of the exercise. This should be the maximum point of exercise.
- After that minute has elapsed, the treadmill will slow, the treadmill will flatten out, and you will walk comfortably for one minute more.
- Once the treadmill has come to a complete stop, you will be escorted off the treadmill to a chair for recovery where your vital signs will continue to be monitored until they return to pre-exercise levels.
- When your vital signs are at the pre-exercise level, the electrocardiogram, blood pressure cuff, and IV will be removed and a small bandage will be placed over the area.
- Three of the sticky tabs will be left on your chest for the final pictures of your heart. These pictures are known as, "Stress Pictures".
- At this time you may eat and drink normally, there are no restrictions.
- About 30 minutes later you will have your stress pictures. These pictures reflect your heart's function during exercise. This time under the camera is of less duration but still requires hands above the head and remaining motionless.
- After the stress pictures, the test will be complete.
- The Cardiologist will compare the Resting Pictures to the Stress Pictures.

How will I get the results of the test?

The test will be interpreted by a cardiologist, who will then send the results to the physician who ordered the test for you. These results are normally available within five working days. Results will not be available to you the day of the test. The technologist or registered nurse cannot discuss results of the test.

What happens when the test is finished?

When you have had your second set of pictures the nuclear technologist will remove the last three sticky tabs from your chest. At that time your test is completed and you may leave with no restrictions. It is important that the bandage be removed within several hours of the test and you inspect the area. If there is any redness or tenderness it is important to phone the number listed below and speak with the nurse.

Directions to your appointment

***There are three locations, check to make sure you know where your appointment will be.**

During construction you will park in the Purple Lot. Registration for this test will be on the 5th floor Main Lobby.

Danbury Hospital

Follow directions to the BLUE parking lot and park in the Purple Section. Enter the main lobby on the fifth floor; at the information desk ask for directions to Stress Testing.

If you have further questions please call (203) 739-7377. 8am-4pm

Danbury Hospital Medical Arts Center:

Located at 111 Osborne Rd., park in any available parking or in the Gold parking garage. Enter the main lobby and proceed to the third floor for registration.

If you have further questions please call (203) 739-4999. 8am-4pm

Southbury:

Located at, 22 Old Waterbury Road, Southbury, CT., upon arrival please register with Cardiology Reception, in Suite 107. 8am-4pm If you have any further questions, please call Southbury Cardiology at (203) 262-4234.