

DANBURY HOSPITAL

Patient Education Sheet

What is a Stress (Exercise) Echocardiogram?

Why is a Stress Echocardiogram ordered?

A Stress (Exercise) Echocardiogram, sometimes called a Stress Echo, is a test used to evaluate heart function by combining an exercise stress test with a transthoracic echocardiogram (echo). A stress echocardiogram uses ultrasound waves to produce images of the heart both before and immediately following exercise. Images of the heart at rest are compared side by side with images of the heart after exercise to evaluate how the heart responds to exercise. This test is ordered for patients with:

- Signs or symptoms that are suggestive of coronary artery disease
- Significant risk factors for coronary artery disease
- To evaluate exercise tolerance when patients have unexplained fatigue and or shortness of breath
- To evaluate blood pressure response to exercise in patients with borderline hypertension, or to look for exercise-induced serious irregular heartbeats.
- *At all of our Echocardiography Labs, the stress echocardiographic information is obtained by trained Cardiac Sonographers, and the results are interpreted by trained Cardiologists.

How long will this test take?

Plan to be in the testing area for approximately one (1) hour.

Prior to the test- What can I expect?

• Do not eat or drink for 2 hours prior to the test. Although sipping water is allowed.

- If you are a smoker, do not smoke 2 hours before the test.
- If you are currently taking any heart medications, ask your physician who orders the test if you should take your medications as normal. Please bring a list of all your medication to the test.
- Wear loose and comfortable clothing that
 is suitable for exercise, including
 comfortable walking shoes or sneakers.
 **Please, note women will not be
 allowed to wear a bra during exercise.

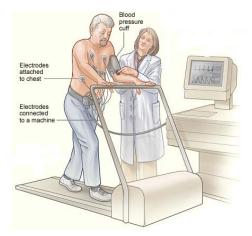
Day of the test- What can I expect?

- After you have arrived and registered for your test, the cardiac sonographer will conduct a brief medical history, including the medications you are presently taking.
- First, the cardiac sonographer will stick 12 sticky electrodes on your chest. They will attach you to the electrocardiogram machine and take 3 resting EKG's, along with a resting blood pressure. Once that is done you will be asked to lay on your left side for the baseline echocardiogram images.
- A colorless gel is applied to your chest and a small microphone-like device, called a transducer is placed on your chest to obtain the images. You will be assisted to the treadmill where you will exercise under direct supervision.
- Next, exercise will be started at a slow "warm-up" speed. The speed of the treadmill and its slope incline is increased every 3 minutes. You will be asked to report any symptoms such as fatigue,

chest or arm pain, shortness of breath, leg fatigue or dizziness.

- EKG recordings and blood pressures are taken every 3 minutes of exercise.
- The test may be ended when your heart beats fast enough, when you get too tired, if you are having significant arrhythmias, or when you experience significant symptoms.
- Immediately after stopping the treadmill, you will be directed to lie on your left side again. The cardiac sonographer has 1 minute to take your post exercise images.
- Instructions may also be given for you to breathe slowly or to hold your breath.
 This helps in obtaining higher quality pictures.
- Once the final EKG and blood pressure are taken, the cardiac sonographer will disconnect you from the EKG machine and you will be free to go.

There are no restrictions following the examination. You can return to your normal diet and activities.



How will I get the results of the test?

Results are not available to you at the time 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 two (2) working days.

*There are five locations, make sure you know which location your appointment is for.

Directions to your appointment

Danbury Hospital Medical Arts Center-Located at 111 Osborne Street, park in any

available parking or in the Gold parking garage. Enter the main lobby on the first floor for registration, and then proceed to the third floor.

If you have further questions please call (203) 739-4999.

Ridgefield Cardiology- Located at 21 South Street, Ridgefield, CT., upon arrival please register at the reception desk. If you have further questions please call (203) 438-1323.

Southbury Cardiovascular Center- Located at 22 Old Waterbury Road, Southbury, CT., upon arrival please register with Cardiology Reception, in Suite 107.

If you have any further questions, please call (203) 262-4234.

Danbury Hospital- Located at 24 Hospital Ave., Danbury, CT. Follow directions to the BLUE parking lot. Enter the main lobby on the fifth floor; at the information desk ask for directions to Cardiology Stress Testing/Echo Lab.

If you have further questions please call (203) 739-4999.

Brookfield Cardiology- Located at 2 Old New Milford Road, Brookfield CT. Enter the main lobby on the first floor and take the elevator to the 2nd Floor. Upon arrival, please register at the reception desk, in Suite 2D

If you have further questions please call (203) 775-6292. 3/2012