

What is a Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram?

Why is a Dobutamine Stress ordered?

A Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram 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. Dobutamine is a drug that increases your heart rate and the force of the contraction of your heart.

This test has been ordered for you if you are unable to walk on a treadmill. Your doctor may also order this test for you if you have asthma.

At all of our Echocardiography Labs, the 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 at the testing area for two (2) hours. The actual infusion time is usually 15 minutes.

Prior to the test- What do I need to do?

- Do not eat or smoke for at least three hours before your test.
- Do not have anything to eat or drink that contains caffeine up to 12 hours prior to the test. Drinking *only* water before the test is permitted.
- If you are a diabetic, test your blood sugar before you arrive at the testing area. Diabetics should have a light meal three hours before the test, as this test may tend to lower your blood sugar. You are encouraged to bring your blood sugar meter with you.

- Take all of your regular medications before the test unless directed otherwise by your doctor. It is recommended that medications known as beta-blockers not be taken prior to performing this test. *** (The list provided below are generic beta-blockers. Due to the hundreds of brand names it is recommended that you check with your doctor if you are unsure if you are taking a beta-blocker.)* Be sure to check with your doctor first before holding any of your medications.

Beta-Blockers

(**Generic Names)

- Acebutolol
 - Atenolol
 - Betaxolol
 - Bisoprolol
 - Carteolol
 - Carvedilol
 - Esmolol
 - Labetalol
 - Metoprolol
 - Nadolol
 - Penbutolol
 - Pindolol
 - Propranolol
 - Sotalol
 - Timolol
- Bring a current list of all your medications with you for the nurse to review.

Day of the test- What can I expect?

- After you have arrived and registered for your test, a Registered Nurse will conduct a brief medical history, including the medications you are presently taking.
- Then an intravenous (IV) will be inserted into your hand or arm.
- You will be asked to lie on a stretcher on your left side so the Cardiac Sonographer can perform 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. This does not cause any significant discomfort and is not harmful.

- After the baseline pictures are obtained a Registered Nurse will place 12 sticky tabs to your chest for the electrocardiogram (EKG), and place the blood pressure cuff to your arm. The nurse will connect a tube into the IV, through which to administer the Dobutamine. A Cardiologist or Cardiology fellow will be present to administer and supervise the test.
- The amount of Dobutamine is determined by your weight; therefore it is important that you provide as accurate a weight as possible.
- Side effects from Dobutamine include: increased heart rate sensation, increased blood pressure, head ache, nausea and anxiety. It is important to know that not everyone experiences these side effects, and those that do, report that the side effects go away quickly once the IV infusion is complete.
- Once started, the rate of the Dobutamine will be increased every three minutes based on your response to the medication.
- In some instances, patients may not have the desired increase of their heart rate with the Dobutamine alone. In those situations, the decision may be made to add an additional medication known as Atropine. Atropine is a medication that will rapidly increase your heart rate. The effects of Atropine are brief. Side effects from atropine include the sensation of a rapidly increased heart rate, anxiety, and possible head ache. Patients with glaucoma cannot receive Atropine; therefore, make sure that the nurse and Cardiologist are aware if you have a diagnosis of glaucoma. The decision to give Atropine is determined by the Cardiologist / Cardiology Fellow.
- During the first 3 minutes of the Dobutamine being administered, additional ultrasound images will be obtained to view the heart's response to the drug.
- When the heart rate reaches its desired maximum rate, the Dobutamine will be stopped. At this time the peak final ultrasound images will be obtained.
- Your vital signs will be monitored for the next ten minutes, or until your heart rate and blood pressure return to pretest levels. The final set of ultrasound images will be obtained at ten minutes of recovery.
- The electrocardiogram, blood pressure cuff, and the IV will be removed. At this time your test is over and you can resume all of your medications, and eat without restrictions.

How will I get the results of the test?

At no time can the cardiac sonographer or registered nurse discuss results of the test. The test will be interpreted by the cardiologist, who will then send the results to the physician who ordered the test for you. These results are normally available within two working days.

***This test is performed only at Danbury Hospital Main Campus.**

Directions to your appointment

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 Cardiology Stress Testing/Echo Lab.

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

Additional information can also be found at our website; www.danburyhospital.org

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