



windwardheart  
center LLC

## How to prepare for a Stress Test:

- No food or drink three hours before the test
- No smoking or caffeine products prior to the test
- Wear comfortable clothing (2 piece outfit e.g. t-shirt and shorts) and footwear suitable for walking and/or running
- Do NOT take beta blocking medication 24 hours prior to the test
  - Toprolol, Metroprolol
  - Lopressor, Inderal, Propanolol, Atenolol
  - Coreg, Carvedilol
- If you are a DIABETIC and your test is before noon, take a ½ dose of insulin

## What happens after a Stress Test?

Once the test finishes, you may return to your normal routine. Be sure to ask your doctor when to resume any medications that you may be taking. Results of the test will be discussed with you in a follow-up appointment; this should be scheduled for approximately two weeks after the test.

## Are there Risks?

As with any physical test, there are risks. Although rare, these may include but are not limited to heart attack, heart rhythm abnormality, stroke, and death. Medical professionals are on hand in the case that any of the above occurs.

**If you have any questions regarding the material in this brochure please contact Windward Heart Center, LLC.**

**This brochure is not a substitute for professional medical care**

# Stress Test

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## What is a Cardiac Stress Test?

Often referred to as a stress EKG, exercise treadmill or exercise stress test; a cardiac stress test allows the doctor to determine how well your heart works. This test records your heartbeat while you perform exercise on a treadmill or are given medicine. The standard stress test takes approximately half an hour, however there are many variations from the standard test (medicine, nuclear, and stress echocardiogram) and may take up to three hours. A stress test helps the doctor understand the strength of your heart and can show whether there is a lack of blood supply. Results will indicate what types of exercise and activity levels are right for you and if further testing is needed.

## What happens during a Stress Test?

During a stress test, electrodes are placed on your upper body; these monitor your heart rate. There are multiple types of stress tests, therefore the sequence of events during each test changes accordingly.

If you are having a standard Exercise Stress Test, you will be required to walk on a treadmill. The intensity level of exercise is easy at first and gradually gets harder; the treadmill either tilts to mimic going uphill and/or speeds up. It is important to exercise for as long as possible in order to get maximum results from the test. Throughout the test, your heartbeat, blood pressure, breathing, and level of tiredness are monitored. Once you have stopped exercising, your heart rate and blood pressure will be checked again.

If you are unable to exercise you are probably going to have a Medicine Stress Test (adenosine, dobutamine, persantine). In this test you will be administered medicine through an IV in the arm, which will induce the heart to react as though you are exercising. You will be lying down for the duration of this test and your heartbeat, blood pressure, breathing, and level of tiredness will be monitored.

If you are having a Nuclear Stress Test, a small amount of thallium (a radioactive substance) will be administered through an IV in your arm at peak activity level. This is an additional step to, either, the exercise stress test or the medicine stress test. You then lie down under a camera that detects the thallium and takes pictures of your heart circulation.

Another type of stress test is called a Stress Echocardiogram. This test follows the same protocols as the exercise stress test and the medicine stress test, however incorporates an echocardiogram. An echocardiogram uses ultrasound to image your heart. Your heart is imaged at both the beginning of the test and at peak activity level and allows the doctor to determine how well the heart walls are pumping.

Generally, the test can be stopped at any time. It is important that if at any time during the test you feel any of the symptoms listed below, you notify the doctor:

- Discomfort in the chest, arm, or jaw
- Severe shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Leg cramps or soreness