

Cardiac Stress Test

Patient Information & Preparation Guide

What is a Stress Test?

A **Cardiac Stress Test** (also called an **Exercise Stress Test** or **Treadmill Test**) is a diagnostic procedure used to evaluate how well your heart functions during physical activity.

Because exercise makes your heart work harder and beat faster, a stress test helps your healthcare provider determine how well your heart and blood vessels respond to increased demand.

Why the Test is Performed:

Your provider may recommend a stress test to:

- Evaluate **symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, or fatigue**
 - Assess your **heart rhythm and blood pressure response** during activity
 - Determine the presence of **coronary artery disease** or **circulatory issues**
 - Monitor **treatment effectiveness** or recovery after a cardiac procedure
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What to Expect During the Test:

- You will be connected to an **electrocardiogram (EKG)** machine that records your heart's electrical activity.
 - A **blood pressure cuff** will monitor your heart rate and blood pressure throughout the test.
 - You will walk on a **treadmill** or pedal a **stationary bike**, with the intensity gradually increasing.
 - The test continues until you reach your target heart rate, develop symptoms, or are asked to stop.
 - In some cases, if you are unable to exercise, a **medication (pharmacologic stress test)** may be given to simulate the effects of exercise.
 - The test typically lasts **30 to 60 minutes** in total.
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Preparation Instructions:

To ensure accurate results, please follow these instructions carefully:

No Caffeine 24 Hours Before Your Appointment:

- Avoid all caffeine for **24 hours prior** to your test.
- This includes coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and certain medications that contain caffeine.
- Caffeine can interfere with heart rate and test accuracy.

No Smoking or Tobacco 12 Hours Before the Test:

- Do **not smoke or use any tobacco products** (including vaping) for **12 hours prior** to your appointment.
- Nicotine can affect your heart rate and blood pressure.

Medications:

- Do **not take any beta blocker medications** on the **day of your test**, unless instructed otherwise by your provider.
- Continue all other medications as directed.
- Bring a list of your current medications with you to your appointment.

Clothing:

- Wear **comfortable, loose-fitting clothing** and **walking shoes** suitable for exercise.

Eating and Drinking:

- You may eat a light meal unless otherwise instructed. Avoid heavy meals before the test.
- Drink water to stay hydrated unless your provider gives you different instructions.

After the Test:

- You may resume normal activities, diet, and medications unless otherwise directed by your provider.
 - Your results will be reviewed by a cardiologist or vascular specialist, and your provider will discuss the findings with you.
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If you have any questions or need to reschedule, please contact our office at 661-324-4100.
Thank you for partnering with us in your heart health.