

DOBUTAMINE ECHOCARDIOGRAM



Procedure:

Your doctor has asked that you have a dobutamine-echocardiogram (dobutamine-echo) to measure your heart's tolerance to work and the heart wall movement when it is working very hard. This test is a stress test of the heart using the medicine dobutamine to make it beat faster and harder. An echocardiogram is performed during the test. During the test, your heart rate is measured by an electrocardiogram (ECG), and your blood pressure is taken while you are being given the medicine. The test will usually take one hour.

Before The Test:

- You will be asked to sign a consent form after your doctor has explained the procedure and its risks to you.
- You may be asked to refrain from eating or drinking (except water) for three hours before the test. Some foods may affect the test results. You should refrain from tobacco usage (cigarettes, chewing tobacco) for three hours before this test.
- If you are being tested as an outpatient, please bring a list of your medications or the prescription bottles with you. If you are unsure whether to take your medications, please consult your doctor.
- Please avoid using body lotion or body powder on your chest the day of the test. Lotions and powders interrupt the signals the monitor is picking up from your heart.

During The Test:

- You will need to undress from the waist up; women will be given a hospital gown or a blanket with which to cover.
- A staff member will place electrodes on your chest to monitor your heart rate. The skin may need to be lightly scraped and chest hair shaved on men to obtain clear test results.
- Blood pressure cuffs will be used during this test. **If your doctor has asked you to avoid using a blood pressure cuff on one or both arms, please inform the staff about this when you are getting prepared for the test.**
- A small intravenous catheter (IV catheter) will be placed in your hand or arm. The medicine given during the test will be given through this catheter. If you are an Inpatient and already have a catheter in your hand or arm, the staff nurse may first try to use this IV site.
- You will first receive a resting echocardiogram. A trained technician will place a small instrument called a probe on the outside of your chest to obtain an image of your heart and its blood flow.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side for the echo portion of the test. The technologist may ask you to change positions periodically.
- You may hear a loud "whooshing" sound during the test. This sound occurs when the technologist is recording your blood flow.
- Once this information is collected, the nurse or staff member will give you dobutamine, a medicine that quickens your heart beat and increases your blood pressure. Lie quietly while this medicine is being given; however, if you have any discomfort or pain or shortness of breathe, please let the staff know immediately. Sometimes this medicine can cause nausea; if you begin to feel bad, please tell the staff. Other medicines may be given to help you with symptoms or to assist doctors in obtaining additional information.
- Once the medicine is given, the technologist will perform another echo ultrasound procedure with you lying on your side. This study usually takes only 15 - 20 minutes; once the medicine is stopped, your heart rate and blood pressure should gradually slow down. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during this time.

Immediately After The Test:

- When the technologist has collected all the necessary data, the electrodes will be removed and you may get dressed.
- Depending on your doctor's request, the catheter may be removed by a nurse or technologist from the arm or hand. Light pressure will be applied to the site to decrease any bleeding. If you are on medications that keep your blood from clotting, please tell the nurse so that pressure can be held a little longer.
- You will probably feel tired after the test. You should avoid heavy exercise or physical work for the remainder of the day. If you have any symptoms or discomfort after you leave, you should contact your doctor immediately.

- Your test results will be sent to your doctor, who will explain them to you.

If you have any questions or concerns before you test please feel free to call our staff at **951.352.3937** or **951.369.3525**.

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