



VIRGINIA HEART

Excellence in Cardiovascular Care

Stress Echocardiogram Patient Instructions

Cardiac stress echocardiogram testing is a diagnostic tool to assess a person's cardiac function as well as exercise capacity. Before the exercise portion of the test begins the sonographer will ask you to lie on your left side to perform a resting echocardiogram. An echocardiogram outlines the heart's movement created from ultrasound vibrations echoed from the heart's structure. After the resting images are complete the test utilizes a treadmill that begins at a low speed without incline. At regular intervals the treadmill speed and slope are raised. The test is terminated when the patient becomes fatigued, a specific heart rate goal is achieved or due to patient symptoms. During the test, the electrical signals of the heart are continuously monitored through ECG and blood pressure measurements are acquired. After the exercise portion is complete you will be asked to quickly return to the exam table and lie on your left side so the sonographer can perform another echocardiogram. The preparation and test take approximately forty five minutes to complete. To ensure the highest quality of testing, please follow the instructions below.

Preparation for the Test:

- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment.
- [x] **DO NOT** take your beta blocker 24 hours prior to the test **unless otherwise instructed by your provider**. Common names for these medications include Carvedilol, Metoprolol, Atenolol and Propranolol.
- You may take all of your other medications at their prescribed times.
- It is OK to have a light meal on the day of your test.
- Drink plenty of water and make sure you are well hydrated before the test.
- It is recommended that you avoid smoking or the use of any tobacco/nicotine products as well as caffeine products prior to the test. These products can affect your blood pressure and heart rate.
- Clothing should be appropriate to exercise in:
 - **Men** – Loose fitting or athletic comfortable shorts, jogging pants, or loose trousers are OK with athletic or rubber-soled shoes. You will be asked to remove your top for the test.
 - **Women** – Shorts, loose fitting slacks or athletic pants are OK with athletic or rubber-soled shoes. You will be asked to remove your bra and change into a gown from the waist up for the test.
- Do not apply lotions, powders or oil on the skin the day of the test.

What to Bring:

- **Current List of your Medications.**
- **Your insurance card.** Without it, you will be asked to sign a waiver stating your responsibility for payment of the test.
- **Prescription Order.** If any physician other than your cardiologist ordered your test, a prescription order with the name of test and diagnosis is needed for the test to be performed.
- **Paperwork:** New patients (or those who haven't been seen in the last 2 years) are required to fill out the Patient History and Patient Privacy forms. You may complete this paperwork at our website (VirginiaHeart.com) 48 hours prior to your visit or in the office the day of your test. If you choose to complete your paperwork in the office please arrive 30 minutes prior to your test.