

Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram

An Echocardiogram (echo) is a test that uses sound waves to take pictures of your heart as it beats. The technologist uses a small probe and moves it slowly over your chest as you lie on your side. There is no radiation involved with the test.

Dobutamine is a medication that will stress your heart if you are not able to perform adequate exercise on a treadmill. The medication is given over 15 to 20 minutes and will be stopped when your target heart rate is reached. If your target heart rate cannot be reached on the maximum dose of dobutamine, you may be given a drug called *atropine* to raise your heart rate further. Ultrasound images of your heart will be recorded before and at different stages during the test.

The test helps diagnose problems with the arteries and valves of your heart and with the pumping action of your heart.

Getting Ready:

HOLD ALL MEDICATIONS **EXCEPT DIABETICS**

- Register at EKG Department of the hospital 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time.
- **If you are diabetic, take ½ usual insulin dose or diabetic pill. Hold all other medications except your inhalers.**
- Do not eat or drink **4** hours prior to the test.
- Your test will take approximately 1 hour.
- Do not apply lotion or powders to the chest area.
- **BRING ALL MEDICATION BOTTLES OR A LIST OF YOUR MEDICATIONS WITH YOU TO YOUR APPOINTMENT.**

Having the Test:

- The nurse will explain the test and have you sign a written consent.
- The nurse will check your blood pressure and heart rate frequently throughout the test. An IV will be started; this is used to give the drug (Dobutamine) during the test.
- You will have an ECG (electrocardiogram) done before the test starts, and this will be repeated frequently during the test.
- An echo will be done at the beginning of the test and also repeated several times while the drug is being given.
- The drug is given into your IV and is slowly adjusted to increase your heart rate. You may feel your heart beating faster. It may cause warm flushing feeling and in some cases a mild headache. Your heart rhythm and blood pressure will be closely monitored during the test.

After the Test:

- You will stay in the Stress Lab for a short time until the effects of the drug have worn off. You can then resume your usual activities.
- The doctor will send a report to your referring physician.