

# DOBUTAMINE STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM

## OVERVIEW

Images of your heart are captured before, during and immediately following an infusion of medication (dobutamine) using non-invasive heart ultrasound by moving a transducer around on the chest.

The images of the heart at rest are compared with the images taken during and after receiving dobutamine to evaluate how your heart responds to simulated exercise. This test allows the doctor to see if the heart's blood supply is able to keep up with the body's demand and if your heart rate is normal. The test is also a way to tell if there may be a blockage in the coronary arteries, assess your heart valves and check for heart damage.

Your doctor may order this test if you are unable to walk long distances. It may also be used to control the rate at which your heart responds to stimuli to accurately assess the heart's structures and function.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR TEST

Here are a few guidelines to follow to prepare for your test:

- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes
- Avoid lotions and body oils on the day of the test
- Don't eat or drink anything except water for two hours before the test
- Don't drink or eat anything with caffeine for 24 hours before the test
- Bring an inhaler (if needed) to the test
- Your doctor may recommend you stop taking certain medications before the test. Some medications, such as beta blockers, can interfere with test results. As always, ask your doctor before stopping any medication.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR DOBUTAMINE STRESS ECHO

Electrode stickers will be placed on your chest to monitor your heart rate, rhythm and electrical activity. Your blood pressure will also be monitored throughout your test.

An ultrasound enhancing agent (UEA) will be used to help the cardiologist visualize the entire heart during imaging. A nurse or sonographer will start an IV to administer the UEA.

When you receive the dobutamine, you may feel as if your heart is racing or pounding. This is a normal response and will subside as the dobutamine leaves your system.

Your care team during the dobutamine stress echocardiogram will include:

- **Cardiac Sonographer** – Performs the echocardiogram to capture images of your heart and its structures
- **Registered Nurse** – Gives you any necessary medication and monitors your vital signs and your heart
- **Cardiac Tech** – Places electrodes on your chest and takes blood pressure readings throughout the exam
- **Supervising Physician** – A cardiologist is always on-site and nearby should you have any questions or need immediate assistance.