

Dobutamine Stress Echo

When your heart is at rest, it may get enough blood through the coronary arteries, even if the arteries are narrowed or blocked. However, during stress or activity, your heart may not be getting the extra blood and oxygen it needs. Physicians can use several techniques to evaluate heart performance under stress.

Expertise in Matters of the Heart

The purpose of a Dobutamine stress echocardiogram is to view the heart's movement under stress, and is particularly useful for those who have difficulty engaging in physical activity. Instead of having the patient exercise on a treadmill, a medication is given that causes the heart to react as if it were exercising. Stress testing helps a physician to:

- Identify heart-related causes of symptoms such as dizziness, fainting, or palpitations that occur during stress.
- Screen for coronary artery disease (CAD) in people without symptoms but with risk factors for the disease, such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of heart disease at a young age.
- Investigate unexplained chest pain when CAD is suspected.
- Determine the heart's ability to tolerate stress following a heart attack or surgery.
- Monitor the effectiveness of medication, surgery, or other therapy.
- Recommend an appropriate level of exercise for someone who is over 40, has led an inactive lifestyle, and wishes to begin an exercise program.

Patient preparation: Before your test, inform your doctor of all medications you are taking, especially heart medications or treatment for



erectile dysfunction, as these can alter your results. Discuss any physical limitations, including joint problems in your legs or hips, that may limit your ability to exercise. If you have diabetes, ask your doctor for further instructions.

On the day of your test, follow these instructions, unless your physician instructs you otherwise:

- Do not eat or drink or smoke for 4 hours prior to your test. Small sips of water are allowed.
- Do not take any medication the day of your test unless you have recently had cardiac surgery or experienced a heart attack, in which case you should take your medications as usual.
- Be sure to bring a list of your current medications to the appointment.

What to expect: An echocardiogram provides an ultrasound image of the heart's size and movements in addition to measuring

electrical impulses. Several electrodes will be attached to your chest for the echocardiogram machine, which will show an image of your heart at work as well as an EKG reading. Your oxygen level will also be monitored. A blood pressure cuff on your upper arm will take blood pressure readings every few minutes during the test.

Your EKG and vital signs will be monitored constantly for any sign that the test should be stopped, and you will be asked regularly to describe how you feel. This procedure lasts about 60 minutes.

How it feels: Dobutamine is a medication that increases your heart rate. It will be given through an IV until you reach your maximum heart rate. While some patients feel no effects from the dobutamine, others feel chest pressure or tightness, chest pain, flushing, light-headedness, dizziness, nausea and/or shortness of breath. These symptoms are normal and mean the medication is working.

Risks: Electrocardiography is harmless and involves no possibility of electric shock, as it simply detects electrical activity that is present within your body. A Dobutamine stress test is routinely very safe; however, emergency equipment and trained personnel are available in the testing area in the event of complications. Your vital signs are monitored throughout the test. There are several severe heart and lung

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Heart Center of the Rockies, the region's premier heart center, is dedicated to providing a comprehensive program of advanced cardiovascular care throughout Colorado, Wyoming and western Nebraska.

conditions for which stress testing is not appropriate. Your doctor should be made aware of all health considerations before these tests are ordered.

Test Results:

Test results will be discussed with you by your doctor.

Location:

- Medical Center of the Rockies
2500 Rocky Mountain Avenue
Loveland, CO 80538
(970) 297-6889
(800) 459-4241
- Steamboat Springs Office
940 Central Park Drive, Suite 290
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487
(970) 870-1035
- Fort Collins – Poudre Valley Hospital
1024 South Lemay Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80528
(970) 297-6889
- Sterling Office
Heart Center of the Rockies
620 Iris Drive
Sterling, CO 80751
(970) 522-7266

Details of Your Upcoming Dobutamine Stress Test:

Appointment Date: _____

Appointment Time: _____ Check in Time: _____

Allergies: _____

The check in time allows for nursing assessment and preparation for your DSE.



For more information call (970) 221-1000, (800) 459-4241, or visit www.heartcenteroftherockies.com