What is a Dobutamine Stress Echo Test?

Why do I need a stress test?

This test helps your physician determine how your heart functions when it is made to work harder by injecting dobutamine. Dobutamine is a drug that has an effect on the heart similar to exercise. This test is done on patients that are unable to exercise adequately or have severe lung disease. An echocardiogram, the ultrasound study of the heart, evaluates the heart’s size, how strongly it pumps blood, and how well the valves are working.

The dobutamine stress echo test is useful to determine:

• If there is a decreased supply of blood and oxygen to the heart at rest as well as with exercise
• If there is reduced movement of the heart muscle.
• Overall level of cardiovascular conditioning
• How quickly the heart recovers after exercise
• How hard the heart can work before symptoms develop
• Estimate the risk of surgery that can cause cardiac complications

What happens during the test?

• An echo technician will do a resting scan of your heart while you are lying down on an exam table. You will lie on your back and on your left side.
• A stress lab technician will prep ten small areas on your chest and place electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) on these areas. The electrodes are attached to an EKG monitor that charts your heart’s electrical activity during the test.
• You will be lying down on an exam table while the technician performs a resting EKG and blood pressure.
• A nurse will place an IV into a vein in your arm or hand. Next, your heart will be “stressed” by injecting a medication called dobutamine into the IV. This medication will increase your heart rate.
• Please tell the technician immediately if you have chest pain, shortness of breath, or any other unusual symptoms at any time.
• The stress lab staff will watch for any changes on the EKG monitor that suggest the test should be stopped. The testing area is supervised by a physician.
• The echo technician will take images of your heart every three minutes during the test.
• At the peak effects of dobutamine, a second echocardiogram will be taken to visualize the heart’s motion with exercise.
• Your heart rate, blood pressure, and EKG will continue to be monitored until the levels are returning to normal. One more echo scan will be done as your heart rate returns to normal.
Instruction checklist for the dobutamine stress echo test:

• **Call** the Pre-registration dept. at (419) 423-5304, at least **24 hours prior** to your test to update any of your personal information. This will save you time on the day of your test. **Also call** (419) 423-5110 at least **24 hours prior** to the test date to confirm your appointment.

• Bring a list of medications you take with you to the test. Include the name and dosage amounts of each medicine. This information can be found on the prescription or bottle label. **Do not** take any of your medications unless instructed otherwise by your physician.
  - If you have asthma, please bring your inhaler medication with you.
  - If you have diabetes, ask your physician how to adjust your medications the day of your test.

• Please refrain from any strenuous exercise or activities the day before your test, or the day of the test.

• **Do Not** eat or drink anything except for small amounts of water for **4 hours prior** to your testing time. The last meal you eat prior to the test should be a low fat meal and should not include caffeine.

• **Do Not** use lotion or powders on your chest the day of the test.

• **Do Not** smoke the day of the test! Nicotine will interfere with the results of your test.

• Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing. Pants or shorts and short sleeve shirts are preferred. (No long sleeves.) Do not wear one-piece undergarments or body suits. Wear tennis or crepe soled shoes.

• **Parking**: Please use our **FREE** valet service at the Center for Diagnostic Studies (CDS) for the easiest of parking. You can also park in the CDS parking lot or use the parking garage.

• **Register**: Please check in at the Center for Diagnostic Studies registration department on the first floor to pick up your paper work and they will direct you to the Heart Care Center.

• The Dobutamine Stress Echo takes about **two hours** to complete.

• If you need to **CANCEL OR CHANGE** your appointment, Please call **CENTRAL SCHEDULING** at (419) 423-5323.

• If you have any **QUESTIONS** about the test, Please call (419) 423-5110. Please leave a message if prompted to do so. We will return your call as soon as possible.

• We request a **24 hour notice** for changes or cancellations if at all possible.