

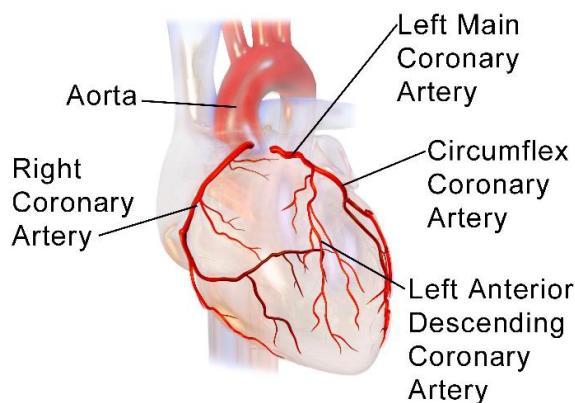
Your Heart Stress Test While in Hospital

Cardiology Department and Nuclear Medicine Department

About your heart

You have 3 main arteries on your heart, called coronary arteries.

- right coronary artery
- left anterior descending coronary artery
- circumflex coronary artery



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These arteries are in charge of delivering oxygen to your heart muscle.

Blocked coronary arteries cause a problem with blood flow to the heart muscle. When this happens, the heart does not work as well as it should.

What is a stress test?

A stress test is a way of finding out if one or more of your coronary arteries are blocked.

There are 2 parts to a stress test:

1. The **exercise or stress part** of the test usually involves walking on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike. Sometimes instead of exercise, we give a medicine through an intravenous or I.V. (say eye-vee) to mimic exercise.
2. The **scan part** of the test involves us giving a tracer through an intravenous. The tracer allows the doctor to see what areas of the heart are getting blood flow.

Your doctor will select the type of stress test that is best for you (see the different types below).

You are connected to a heart monitor and blood pressure machine so that a cardiology technologist can monitor your heart rate, heart rhythm, and blood pressure.

A technologist will put in an intravenous if your test involves tracer, medicine, or both.

Types of stress tests

- **Exercise Tolerance Test (ETT)** involves walking on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike while connected to a heart monitor (electrocardiogram or ECG monitor).
- **Stress Myocardial Perfusion Imaging** involves being given a tracer while walking on a treadmill or riding a stationary bike, followed by a scan of the heart.
- **Persantine Myocardial Perfusion Imaging (MPI)** involves being given a medicine to mimic exercise and a tracer, followed by a scan of the heart. This medicine opens blood vessels without raising the heart rate. No actual exercise is done.
- **Dobutamine Myocardial Perfusion Imaging** involves being given a medicine to mimic exercise and a tracer, followed by a scan of the heart. This medicine raises the heart rate. No actual exercise is done. Preferred for people with severe, uncontrolled asthma.

Why do I need a stress test?

Your doctor wants to know how your heart, lungs, and muscles respond to exercise. A stress test can tell what level of exercise you can do safely.

If you have had chest pain or angina, the exercise part of the test can tell how much exercise you can do before you get to where you have chest pain.

After a heart attack, the exercise part of the test can help tell how well your heart has healed. The result of the test helps decide when you can go back to work or go on to an exercise program.

Are the medicine and tracer safe?

Both are safe and will not cause problems with your current medicines.

Is this test safe?

Stress tests are very safe. We stop the test if any of these things happen:

- You feel exhausted.
- You have abnormal blood pressure.
- You have an abnormal heart tracing (ECG).
- You have chest pain or any other discomfort.

What complications might there be?

If we give Persantine as part of the test, you might feel dizzy or get a headache. We can give a “reversal” medicine to get rid of unwanted effects.

If we give Dobutamine as part of the test, you might notice your heart rate getting faster. When we stop the medicine, your heart rate will return to normal.

How long does the stress test take?

It depends on the type of test being done. We could schedule you for either a one-day test or two-day test.

We do the test in our Cardiology and Nuclear Medicine departments. The time you spend in each department can take less than one hour.

How do I prepare for a stress test?

For the Exercise Tolerance Test:

For 2 hours before the test:

- **Do not** eat or drink anything.

For any of the other 3 types of tests:

Your doctor might adjust what medicines you are taking and temporarily stop others before the test. Beta blockers are medicines that might be stopped.

Starting 24 hours before the test:

- **Do not** have anything with caffeine. This means no coffee, tea, cola, or chocolate.
- **Do not** take any medicines with codeine, such as Tylenol #3.

At least 8 hours before the test, we will remove any nitroglycerin patches.

Starting 4 hours before the test, do not eat or drink anything. If directed to take medicines, you can take them with a small sip of water.

Note: If you have diabetes, eat just enough to manage your blood sugar.

For all types of stress tests:

If you do not speak or understand English well enough, we can arrange for a medical interpreter in person, by phone, or by video (if video is available). Let us know. You are also welcome to have someone who speaks English join you.

How would I feel if I have a blocked artery?

You might have chest pain or trouble breathing during the test. If this happens, the doctor can give you medicine to ease your discomfort.

What can I expect after a stress test?

If your test shows signs of a blocked coronary artery, the doctor will talk with you before you leave the hospital about what the next steps might be. This could include any of the following:

- taking medicines to treat the block
- having an angiogram (heart catheterization) for a more detailed look at the arteries
- keeping you in the hospital for further monitoring
- having other tests: _____