

## STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM TEST

### ***What is a stress echocardiogram?***

- A echocardiogram, also called an echo, is a test that uses ultrasound waves to produce images of the heart.
- A microphone-like device, called a transducer, sends out ultrasound waves that bounce off the heart to produce images of the heart.
- When combined with exercise on a treadmill, the echo can detect areas of the heart that are not receiving enough blood flow.
- A stress echo is especially useful in identifying blockages in arteries that supply blood flow and oxygen to the heart.

### ***Why has your doctor ordered a stress echocardiogram?***

- Identify cause of chest pain, which can occur with blockages in blood flow to heart.
- Monitor heart function in people with known heart disease.
- Determine response to treatments after angioplasty or bypass surgery, or response to medications.

### ***How do I prepare for a stress echocardiogram?***

- Do not eat 2 hours prior to your test.
- Avoid caffeine 12 hours prior to your test.
- Do not smoke or use any form of nicotine 12 hours prior to your test.
- Take your medications on the day of the test unless instructed otherwise.
- Do not apply lotions or powders to the chest.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and walking shoes.

### ***What happens during the stress echocardiogram?***

- You will be given an explanation of the test and asked to sign a consent form.
- Electrodes are placed on your chest and connected by wires to the ECG machine.
- While you lie on an exam table, an echo technician moves the transducer over your chest to obtain images of your heart.
- A nurse or exercise physiologist supervises the stress portion while you exercise.
- Your blood pressure is checked frequently, and your ECG is continually monitored.
- Report any symptoms, such as chest pain, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- Exercise as long as you can since that increases the accuracy of the test.
- When you reach a point that you do not feel that you can exercise any longer, the treadmill is stopped abruptly and you return to the exam table.
- Post-exercise images of your heart are obtained.
- Your blood pressure and ECG will be monitored for several minutes after the test.

### ***When will I know the results of the echo test?***

- Final interpretation of the test results is completed by a cardiologist.
- The physician ordering your test and family doctor will receive a report within 3 days.