



Pacific Cardiovascular Associates Medical Group, Inc.
24012 Calle De La Plata - Suite 230
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 837-1578

What You Need to Know About Your Exercise Stress Test

What is an exercise stress test?

The exercise stress test involves exercising on a treadmill while you are closely monitored. The test is used to:

- Determine your likelihood of having coronary artery disease (blocked arteries),
- Identify abnormal heart rhythms,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your cardiac treatment plan; and
- Help you develop a safe exercise program

Can I eat or drink on the day of the test?

Yes, however, **DO NOT** eat or drink anything except water for **4 hours** before the test. In addition, **DO NOT** drink or eat caffeinated, decaffeinated, or caffeine-free products (Cola, Mountain Dew, Chocolate Products, Coffee or Tea) for **12 hours** before the test. Caffeine will interfere with the results of your test.

Should I take my medications the day of the test?

DO NOT take the following heart medications on the day of your test unless your physician tells you otherwise or if the medication is needed to treat chest discomfort the day of the test:

- Isosorbide Dinitrate (Isordil, Sorbitrate)
- Isosorbide Mononitrate (Imdur, Ismo, Monoket)
- Nitroglycerin (Deponit, Nitropatches, Nitrostat)
- Dipyridamole (Persantine) for **48 hours** before the test

Your physician may also ask you to stop taking other heart medications on the day of your test. If you have any questions about your medications please ask your physician.

NOTE: Do not discontinue any medication without first talking with your physician.

Guidelines for Diabetics

If you take **insulin** to control your blood sugar, ask your physician what dosage you should take on the day of your test. Often, your physician will tell you to take only half of your usual morning dose and to eat a **light meal 4 hours** before the test. If you take **pills** to control your blood sugar, do not take your medication until after the test is complete.

DO NOT take your diabetes medication and skip a meal before the test.

If you own a glucose monitor, bring it with you to check your blood sugar levels before and after your exercise stress test. If you think your blood sugar is low, tell the lab personnel immediately. Plan to eat and take your blood sugar medication following your exercise stress test.

What Should I Wear the Day of the Test?

Wear comfortable clothes. Bring shoes suitable for walking. Do not bring valuables. You will be given a locker to store your belongings during the test.

What Happens During the Test?

- Your exercise stress test will take place in the Stress Lab located at 24012 Calle De La Plata, Suite 230, Laguna Hills, CA 92653. The testing area is supervised by a physician.
- First, a stress technician will gently rub ten small areas on your chest and place electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) on these areas. The electrodes are attached to an electrocardiograph (EKG) monitor that charts your heart's electrical activity during the test.
- Before you start exercising, the stress technician will perform a resting EKG, measure your resting heart rate and take your blood pressure.
- You will exercise on a treadmill.
- The lab personnel will ask you to start exercising and gradually increase your rate of exercise. You will be asked to exercise very hard until you are exhausted.

- At regular intervals, the lab personnel will ask you how you're feeling. Please tell them if you feel pain or discomfort in your chest, arm or jaw or if you feel short of breath, dizzy, lightheaded, or if you have any other unusual symptoms.
- The lab personnel will watch for any symptoms or changes on the EKG monitor that suggest the test should be stopped.
- After the test, you will walk slowly for a couple of minutes to cool down. Your heart rate, blood pressure and EKG will continue to be monitored until the levels are returning to normal.

How Will I Feel During The Test?

You will be encouraged to exercise until you are exhausted. It is normal for your heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, and perspiration to increase. The data obtained during this test will allow your physician to assess your heart's ability to function.

If you begin to notice chest discomfort, excessive shortness of breath, lightheadedness, irregular heart beats or other symptoms of concern please tell the stress lab personnel immediately.

How Long Does The Test Take?

The appointment will take about 60 minutes. The actual exercise time is usually between 7 and 12 minutes..

How Do I Get The Results Of My Test?

Your physician will mail the test results to you or discuss the results with you after a cardiologist has reviewed the information.

This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or health care provider. Please consult your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition.