

## Exercise Stress Echocardiogram

### What is an Exercise Stress Echocardiogram?

This test is to see how your heart performs when it is placed under exercise or stress. The test is often used to investigate symptoms such as chest discomfort or breathlessness, and in people with known or suspected heart disease.

### What happens during an Exercise Stress Test?

During an exercise stress echocardiogram, first stage a cardiac scientist performs an echocardiogram, (ultrasound of the heart). To ensure good contact between your skin and the probe, ultrasound jelly is placed at several different sites on your chest. Second stage, your heart is exercised or 'stressed' by walking on a treadmill. The speed and slope of the treadmill will increase every few minutes, to make your heart work harder. When your heart is working as hard as possible, you stop exercising and quickly lie down on the bed. More echocardiogram pictures are taken. Your



heartbeat will be monitored throughout exercise and for after exercise is stopped.

### Is the test dangerous?

There is a rare risk of having a heart attack or death as a result of this procedure is extremely rare. The risks need to be balanced against the potential benefits and the information gained from this test. A Doctor will be present at all times during the test who will be monitoring your progress closely.

You will be encouraged to exercise until you are exhausted. It is normal for your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate to increase. When you stop exercising suddenly, it is normal to feel a little unsteady when getting off the treadmill and onto the exam table for the echocardiogram.

### What do I have to do to prepare for the test?

As you will be exercising on a treadmill, we advise that you to wear suitable clothing and footwear. You may eat and drink the day of your test but please cease food or drink (except water) 4 hours prior to your test. Please avoid consuming any caffeine or caffeinated products on the day of the test, this includes but not limited to coffee, tea, high sugary drinks i.e. cola, energy drinks, and chocolate products. Avoid smoking cigarettes on the day prior to your test. Both caffeine and nicotine will interfere with the results of your test.