

Dobutamine Stress Test

What is a dobutamine stress test?

A dobutamine stress echocardiogram allows your doctor to see how well your heart is working during exercise conditions.

This test is used for people who cannot exercise on a treadmill. Instead, you will be given dobutamine, a medicine that makes your heart beat faster and stronger while you lie in bed.

The test takes 60 to 90 minutes.

Before the Test

- Ask your doctor if you should take any of your regular medicines before the test.
- Do not eat or drink anything 4 hours before the test.
- Do not drink any beverage with caffeine, including decaffeinated coffee, 6 hours before the test.

During the Test

- You will be asked to undress from the waist up. A hospital gown will be given to you.
- An EKG technician will attach electrode patches (discs) to your chest for monitoring your heart rhythm.
- Your blood pressure is checked, and the cuff is left in place for regular blood pressure checks during the test.
- A nurse will insert a small intravenous (IV) catheter into your arm vein. The dobutamine medicine will be given through the IV catheter.
- You will lie down on your left side while the technician gets ultrasound images of your heart.
- Echo images will be taken before the dobutamine is started and at certain times while you receive the medicine. The room will be darkened during the echo imaging.
- A doctor maybe present during the test.
- You will be asked to report any pain in your arms, chest or jaw, or unusual shortness of breath.

- You may need to have a dobutamine stress test with Definity. This is the same test as a regular dobutamine stress test. The only difference is the addition of a contrast called Definity. The contrast would be needed when the first echo images are not clear. Definity helps make the echo images more clear.

After the Test

- Your blood pressure and heart rhythm will be monitored until your heart rate returns to normal.
- The effect of the medicine wears off quickly. Your heart rate should return to normal within 5 to 10 minutes.
- The nurse will remove the IV from your arm.
- You can resume your normal activities, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Your doctor doing the test will briefly give you the results of your test.
- Your ordering provider will get a report of the results within one week of the test.