

#### When You Come to Take the Test

Please check in at the Outpatient Registration desk at Greene County Medical Center in Jefferson on:

Day:	
Date:	
Time:	

#### Do you have other questions?

You may direct any other questions or concerns you may have regarding your upcoming cardiac stress test to the staff:

# Cardiac Management 515-386-2114, ext. 469

\*If you are unable to keep your appointment, please notify the McFarland Clinic-Jefferson office by calling 515-386-4192.



Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(515) 386-2114, ext. 469 FAX: (515) 386-2017

#### **Greene County Medical Center**

1000 West Lincolnway Jefferson, IA 50129

gcmchealth.com

### Preparing for a Stress Echocardiogram

**Care Management Services** 





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## What is a stress echocardiogram?

A stress echocardiogram (also known as an exercise echo) is a test that combines an ultrasound study of the heart with an exercise test. The test allows doctors to see how the heart functions when it's made to work harder. This test is especially useful in diagnosing coronary artery disease, which is the presence of blockages in the coronary arteries.

#### What does it show?

During the test, several electrodes will be placed on your chest. These will be used to obtain an electrocardiogram, or a recording of your heart's electrical activity. A blood pressure cuff will be applied to your arm. A small device called a transducer is held against the chest. The transducer sends ultrasound waves that reflect off the various parts of the heart.

The echoes are converted into moving images of the heart. These images are displayed on a television screen and are recorded on videotape. The test is first done at rest, then during or immediately after an exercise test. Doctors then compare the images. Normally, all areas of the heart muscle pump more vigorously during exercise.

If an area of the heart muscle does not pump as it should during exercise, this often indicates that it is not receiving enough blood because of a blocked or narrowed artery. The exercise portion shows doctors which areas of the heart muscle do not receive an adequate blood supply. However, it does not provide images of the actual coronary arteries. If your doctor suspects blocked or narrowed arteries, he or she may recommend additional tests.

#### What happens during the test?

The exercise stress test will be performed in Cardiac Management at the medical center. The test is divided into three parts: first, a resting echocardiogram is performed. Next you will walk on the treadmill. Then, another echocardiogram is performed while your heart is still beating rapidly.

#### How long does it take?

You should allow one hour which includes preparations for the test, the exercise portion and the imaging portion.

#### Is it safe?

The test is very safe. There are no known risks from the ultrasound waves. The exercise test is also safe. A small amount of risk does exist, however, because it stresses the heart. Possible but rare complications include abnormal heart rhythms and a heart attack. Experience personnel are available to handle any emergency.

#### **The Results**

You can expect your testing results to arrive to the ordering physician in about two days. If you do not hear from your physician within three days, call his or her office.



#### **Preparing for the Test**

If you take a beta blocker or any other medication listed here, DO NOT take them the night before or the morning of the test. It is a good idea to check with your doctor first if you are on a heart medication not listed here. He or she may want you to hold that medication prior to your test.

- Acebutolol-Sectal
- Metroprolol-Lopressor
- Nadolol-Corgard
- Timolol-Blocadren
- Verpamil-Isptin/calan
- Coreg-Carvedilol
- Pindolol-Visken
- Diltiazem-Cardizem/Dilacor
- Propranolol-Inderal
- Atenolol-Tenormin
- Labetalol-Trandate/Normodyne
- Bystolic

**DO NOT EAT OR DRINK THREE HOURS PRIOR TO THE TEST.** This will prevent the possibility of nausea, which may accompany vigorous exercise after eating. If you are diabetic and take medications for diabetes, you will need special instructions from your doctor.

DO NOT USE LOTIONS OR OILS ON YOUR BODY PRIOR TO TESTING.

WEAR LOOSE, COMFORTABLE CLOTHING THAT IS SUITABLE FOR EXERCISE. Men usually don't wear a shirt during the test and women generally wear a lightweight cape that is provided. You should also wear comfortable walking shoes or sneakers.

#### Information to Bring with You

On the day of your cardiac stress test, you will be asked to supply the following information:

- Your height
- Your weight
- Previous cardiac history (dates of any heart attacks, heart surgeries, angiograms, etc.)
- Your recent symptoms
- · A complete list of your medications

It may be helpful for you to have this information in written form.