



Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram



What is a dobutamine stress echocardiogram?

The purpose of a dobutamine stress echocardiogram is to view the heart's movement under stress. It was developed for people who are unable to exercise on a treadmill or stationary cycle as required using a more traditional stress echo. In this test, you will be given dobutamine, a special medication that stimulates the heart and causes it to react as if it was exercising.

The dobutamine stress echo is a valuable diagnostic tool that allows the cardiologist to assess a number of different things including:

- Identify heart-related causes of symptoms such as dizziness, fainting,

or palpitations that occur during stress.

- Screen for coronary artery disease (CAD) in people without symptoms but with risk factors for the disease, such as smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of heart disease at a young age.
- Investigate unexplained chest pain when CAD is suspected.
- Determine the heart's ability to tolerate stress following a heart attack or prior to surgery.
- Monitor the effectiveness of medication, procedures, surgery, or other therapy.

California Cardiovascular Consultants
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Patient preparation

- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Do not eat for a minimum of 4 hours before the test. If your appointment is in the morning, do not eat after midnight the night before your test.
- Drinking small sips of water is allowed before the test.
- DO NOT DRINK CAFFEINE (coffee or tea) the day of the test.
- Stop taking all medications including beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, nitrates and digoxin for 24 hours prior to your test unless directed otherwise by your doctor. If you have any questions regarding the medications you are taking, call your doctor.

What happens during the dobutamine stress echocardiogram?

- You will be given a hospital gown and asked to remove clothing from the waist up.
- A sonographer (ultrasound technician) will place electrodes on your chest to monitor your electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Your blood pressure and ECG will be monitored throughout the test.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side on an exam table. The sonographer will place a wand (the ultrasound transducer that directs the sound waves) on different areas of your chest. To facilitate movement on your skin, a small amount of gel is placed on the end of the wand.
- An intravenous line (IV) will be inserted into a vein in your arm so the dobutamine medication can be

delivered directly into your bloodstream.

- Your doctor will begin the infusion of dobutamine into the IV while the ultrasound technician continues to record echo images.
- The dobutamine may give you a warm, flushing feeling and some patients experience a mild headache.
- Throughout the test, your doctor and the ultrasound technician will ask how you are feeling. Be sure to tell them if you feel chest, arm or jaw pain or if you are, short of breath, dizzy or feel lightheaded.
- The IV line will be removed from your arm once all of the medication has entered your bloodstream.

Will I feel any pain or discomfort during the test?

You should not feel any pain or discomfort during the test. The gel on the ultrasound transducer may feel cool on your skin as it is moved across your chest.

How long does the test take?

Usually about 50-60 minutes including the preparation. After the test, you may get dressed and go about your daily business.

How do I get the results of my echocardiogram?

After your cardiologist reviews the test, he or she will discuss the test results with you and a report will be mailed to your primary care physician.

2333 Mowry Ave, Suite 300 Fremont, CA 94538	27206 Calaroga Ave Suite 205 Hayward, CA 94545	1532 150 th Avenue San Leandro, CA 94578	500 E. Calaveras Blvd, Suite 100 Milpitas, CA 95035	6250 Thornton Ave, Newark, CA Tel: (510) 791-1798 Fax: (408) 942-0980	175 N. Jackson Ave Suite 103, San Jose, CA 95116 Tel: (408) 272-1600 Fax: (408) 729-1600
Tel: (510) 796-0222 Fax: (510) 796-7760	Tel: (510) 670-1111 Fax: (510) 670-4772	Fax: (510) 278-3757	Tel: (408) 942-0980 Fax: (408) 942-0982		