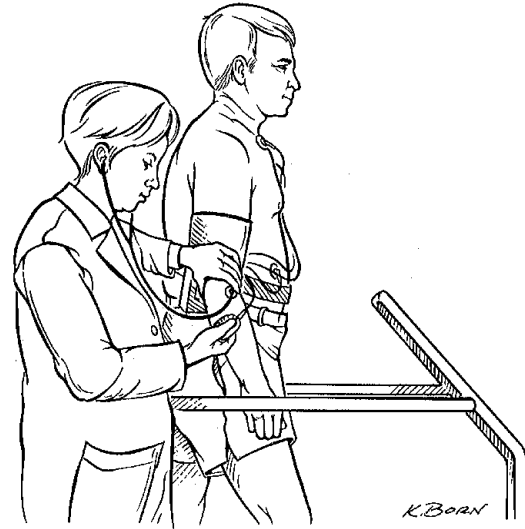


What Is a Stress Test?

Why do I need a stress test?

A stress test, sometimes called a treadmill test or exercise test, helps your doctor find out how well your heart handles work. As your body works harder during the test, it requires more fuel and your heart has to pump more blood. The test can show if there's a lack of blood supply through the arteries that go to the heart.

Taking a stress test also helps your doctor know the kind and level of exercise that's right for you.



The results of your stress test may help your doctor decide if you have heart disease, and if so, how severe it is.

What happens during the test?

- You're hooked up to equipment to monitor your heart.
 - You walk slowly in place on the treadmill.
 - It tilts so you feel like you're going up a small hill.
 - It changes speeds to make you walk faster.
 - You may be asked to breathe into a tube for a couple of minutes.
 - You can stop the test at any time if you need to.
 - After slowing down for a few minutes, you'll sit or lie down and your heart and blood pressure will be checked.
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What is monitored during the test?

- Your heart rate
 - Your breathing
 - Your blood pressure
 - Your electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)
 - How tired you feel
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What equipment is used?

The electrocardiography machine will record your heart beat and heart waves in an electrocardiogram (ECG). Tiny wires, or electrodes, will be hooked up to your chest and arms or shoulders.

- Near the end, you may breathe into a mouthpiece that will measure the air you breathe out.

Is there a risk?

- There's very little risk — no more than if you walked fast or jogged up a big hill.
- Medical professionals are on hand in case anything unusual happens during the test.

How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or health care professional. Or call your American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721.
- If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

Could it give me a heart attack?

Will I need more tests?
