

Dobutamine stress echocardiogram



This test is for people who cannot exercise on a treadmill or an exercise bike. It involves giving you a drug called dobutamine, which makes your heart beat faster to mimic the effects of exercise on the heart.

The specialist can then use an echocardiogram (echo) to:

- assess how well your heart is working
- recommend suitable treatment options.

What happens?

Small electrodes are placed on your chest to monitor the rate and rhythm of your heart. Your blood pressure is also monitored.

The technician places a wand on different areas of your chest. The wand sends out sound waves that produce echo images on the computer screen.

An intravenous (IV) line is inserted into your arm so the dobutamine can go straight into your bloodstream. The IV line is taken out when all the drug is in your bloodstream.

The test takes about one hour but you may be in the hospital for about 90 minutes.

How do I get ready?

There are eating and drinking restrictions for this test:

- Avoid drinking caffeine (coffee, tea, cola) but you may drink water
- Don't eat for a minimum of four hours before the test
- Wear comfortable clothing.

What are the risks?

This drug may give you a warm, flushing feeling. Some people have a mild headache.

There is a small risk of developing an allergic reaction if a contrast dye is used. If you have had allergic reactions to any medicines before, please inform the doctor before starting the scan.

If you have angina, there is an extremely small risk you may have a small heart attack during the scan.