



Exercise Stress Test

exercise stress test



An exercise stress test is the assessment of a patient's ability to tolerate increasing intensities of exercise while their blood pressure, heart electrical impulses and other responses are monitored.

How does a stress test work?

While being monitored, the patient is put under physical stress – usually by walking on a treadmill. For patients who are unable to physically exercise, a medicine can be given that increases the heart rate similarly to exercise.

Why take an exercise stress test?

A stress test can provide valuable information about several medical conditions, including:

- **Coronary artery disease.** If the heart muscle isn't getting enough oxygen, it is usually because of a critical blockage in one or more heart arteries. Oxygen demands created by the blockage may not be noticeable except during physical exertion.
- **Electrical abnormalities.** Heart rhythms that are too fast, too slow or irregular may be identified during a stress test.
- **Peripheral vascular disease.** An exercise test is often used to find out if there is adequate blood flow to the legs.

- **Other exercise-related abnormalities.**

An exercise test can provide information about pulmonary disease and certain metabolic disorders.

- **Functional capacities.** A person's fitness level or ability to do work can be revealed with an exercise test. This information can help a doctor who is trying to understand a medical problem.

Is it safe?

Complications associated with exercise testing are relatively rare. Knowing when not to perform the test and when to stop a test keep the incidence of complications to less than 1 percent.

What are the benefits?

Stress testing is a non-invasive, low-risk test that can provide information about various disease processes. By placing a patient under physical stress, a disease that may be hidden while the heart is at rest can often be uncovered.

How soon will you know the test results?

If your physician performs the stress test, you may know the results immediately. Otherwise your doctor will be contacted immediately if serious abnormalities are found. Usually doctor and patient discuss the results at a later date.



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