



Why do I need this test?

A Dobutamine stress echocardiogram (or “echo”) is a test that combines an ultrasound study of their heart with a stress test. It allows doctors to learn how the heart functions when it is made to work harder. The most common reasons for doing this exam are:

- To check for any major blockage of the blood flow to the heart muscle.
- To help your doctor check your heart before any surgery you may need.

What happens before the test?

- Do not eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your test unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- You may take your medications with a sip of water unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.
- If you are currently taking any heart medications, check with your doctor. They *may* ask you to stop certain medications a day or two before the test. This can help get more accurate test results.
- Bring a list of your current medications with you.
- Plan to be at the hospital for up to 2 hours.

What happens upon arrival?

An intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into a vein in your arm. A

nurse will talk with you about the medications you are taking, any medication allergies and the reason you are having the exam.

What happens during the test?

- You will have electrodes attached to your chest to monitor your electrocardiogram (EKG) during the test.
- You will have a resting EKG and blood pressure done.
- A resting echo study is done.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side.
- The technologist will use a handheld device called a transducer to send and receive ultrasound signals. A computer then calculates the travel time of the waves to and from the heart and constructs an image of the heart onto a monitor.
- An echo does not require the use of radiation and produces a very reliable image, making the test safe and painless.
- A medication called Dobutamine is injected slowly through the IV line.
- This medication will increase your heart rate.
- The doctor or nurse will frequently check your heart monitor, blood pressure and ask how you are feeling.

- Once you meet your target heart rate, you will have another echo study done.
- A nurse will continue to monitor your heart and blood pressure as ordered by your doctor.
- The IV will be taken out.
- There are no restrictions or limitations after your test unless otherwise instructed by your nurse or doctor.

What happens after the test?

There are no restrictions or limitations after your test, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. You may resume your usual diet, fluids, medications and activity.

