

Clinical stress test

Why is this test done?

A clinical stress test is most often done

- to diagnose coronary artery disease, predict how it will progress and determine how severe it is, or to assess treatment need and effectiveness
- to investigate heart rhythm disorders
- to assess physical performance and the ability to work and function
- for rehabilitation planning or monitoring
- to investigate exercise-induced asthma
- to find out how blood pressure responds to stress

How should I prepare for the test?

What to bring:

- lightweight trousers (for example joggers or leggings) suitable for pedalling a stationary bicycle
- trainers or similar footwear
- women may wish to bring a loose-fitting T-shirt to wear during the test, as well as a sports bra or other non-underwire bra
- a list of the medications you are using

The doctor responsible for your care will decide which medications you should use or stop using before the test. Short-acting nitrates (Dinit spray, Nitro, Nitromex) should be avoided for **two hours** before the test if possible. Please call the telephone number appended to these instructions if you have to take any of the above-mentioned medicines shortly before the test.

Heart rate and blood pressure are affected by recreational substance use, eating, and exercise. Therefore, please refrain from the following before the test:

- tobacco, snus, e-cigarette and other tobacco products for at least **two hours**
- coffee, tea, cola, and other stimulating drinks for at least **four hours**
- alcohol for at least **two days**

In addition:

- Avoid eating a heavy meal, but **do not fast**. Have a light meal about two hours before the test, such as a small sandwich with a glass of milk.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity on the day before and the day of the test, and try to get a good night's sleep.
- The test cannot be done while you have a respiratory infection or some other inflammatory condition (such as a cold, fever or sore throat), or for two weeks afterwards.
- There is a possibility to take a shower after the exercise.

How is this test done?

First we will measure your height and weight. We will attach adhesive electrode pads to your chest, limbs and back to record your heart tracing (electrocardiogram, ECG) during the test. Before the stress phase, we will measure your blood pressure in both a reclining and a seated position and do some PEF breathing tests for detecting exercise-induced asthma.

The stress part of the test is usually done by having you pedal a bicycle under a doctor's supervision until you get tired/fatigued or have symptoms that make us stop the test. While you are exercising, we will monitor your heart tracing, measure your blood oxygen level and blood pressure, and make a note of any symptoms you have. The pedalling is continued for an average of ten minutes.

The recovery phase after exercise lasts at least six minutes. During that time, we will continue to monitor your heart tracing, your blood pressure and how you feel.

How long will the test last?

The test takes about 60 minutes.

Where can I get the test results?

The ward or clinic that is treating you will tell you about the test results.

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