



Exercise tolerance test (non-imaging)

Cardiovascular division: 617-667-2690

A non-imaging exercise tolerance test (ETT or stress test) is a test that helps your doctor see if you have an ischemic coronary syndrome. This syndrome is a narrowing of blood vessel(s) that supply oxygen to the heart muscle. If the heart muscle doesn't get enough oxygen, it can cause chest pain or angina. Because angina typically occurs during exercise, we do this test with you walking on a treadmill.

During this test, your symptoms, ECG, and blood pressure are monitored to determine how blood is flowing to your heart muscle.

How do I prepare for this test?

- Do not eat or drink anything containing caffeine for 3 hours before this test. This includes coffee, tea, colas, and chocolate, and other substances as noted in the box to the right.
- Do not smoke for two hours before this test.
- Do not eat or drink anything except water for two hours before this test.

No caffeine for 3 hours before your test. NO:

- coffee or tea, regular OR decaffeinated
- chocolate or cocoa
- soft drinks containing caffeine, including cola, Mountain Dew, Dr. Pepper, Mr. Pibb, Mellow Yellow, Tab
- Medicines containing caffeine, including Anacin, Excedrin, NoDoz, Cafergot, Darvon Compound, Fiorinal, Synalog DC, and Wigraine

May I take my medication?

- Follow your doctor's instructions regarding medication. **Do not stop your medication unless your doctor tells you to.** You should start all your medicines again after the test is over. *Please bring a complete listing of all your medicines with you.*
- If you are a diabetic and take insulin or another diabetes medication, please check with your doctor for advice regarding doses before and after this test. *Please bring your insulin or oral diabetes medicine to the hospital so you can take the dose recommended by your doctor.*

What should I wear?

Please wear comfortable clothes that break at the waist (a shirt or blouse) and flat walking shoes or sneakers. Sneakers are strongly recommended. Electrodes will be placed on your chest so that your heart can be monitored during exercise. Women must remove their bras for the procedure. If you wear an unusually large or small size of clothing, please bring your own T-shirt and pants. You will be working hard during this test. Comfortable clothing will make things easier for you.

What happens during this test?

You will exercise by walking on a treadmill. The staff performing your test will interact with you throughout the test asking if you are having any symptoms. They will continuously monitor your ECG and take your blood pressure many times while you are exercising and for at least 10 minutes after you stop.

How long will the test take?

The test takes a total of 45-60 minutes.

How do I get the results?

An attending cardiologist will review the results and put a report in the computer that will be available to your doctor and any other health care professional taking care of your needs.

How safe is this test?

The test is considered to be low risk. However, one out every 2,500 persons taking this test may have a complication. The medical staff performing your test is qualified to take care of any issues that may arise.