

Stress Test: A stress test can also be called a treadmill test or exercise test. It helps your doctor find out how well your heart handles hard work. As your body works harder during the test, it requires more fuel, and your heart has to pump more blood. The test can show if there is a lack of blood supply through the arteries that go to the heart. A stress test can also help the doctor know the kind and level of exercise that is right for you.

What happens during a stress test?

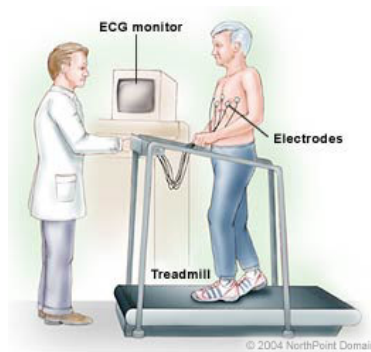
- You are hooked up to many wires that monitor your heart.
- You walk slowly in place on the treadmill.
- The treadmill will increase in speed and in height so you feel like you are walking uphill.
- You can stop the test at any time if you need to
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What is monitored during the test?

- Heart rate
- Blood pressure
- Your breathing
- Your electrocardiogram (EKG)
- How tired you feel.

What does a stress test show?

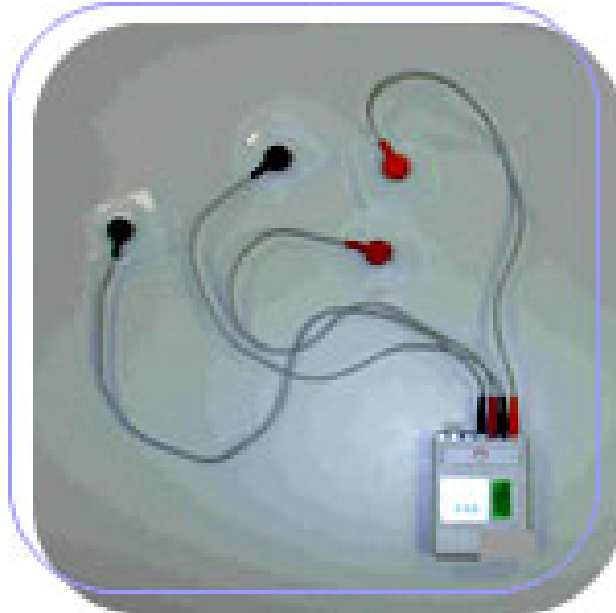
The results of the stress test help the doctor decide if you have heart disease, and if so, how severe it is.



Holter Monitors

The Holter monitor was invented by Dr. Norman Holter. It is a device that records the heart rhythm continuously for 24 hours. This means that it records each and every heart beat over that time. Sticky patches (electrodes) on the chest are connected to wires from the Holter monitor.

The monitor is carried with the patient for the recording period. The heart rhythm is recorded onto a cassette tape or flash card technology and then processed at a heart center. From this recording, a wide variety of information can be obtained including heart rates during day and night, abnormal heart beats, and recording of rhythm during any symptoms during the recording. A diary comes with the Holter for the patient or caregiver to write down the time and type of symptoms so the rhythm can be reviewed.

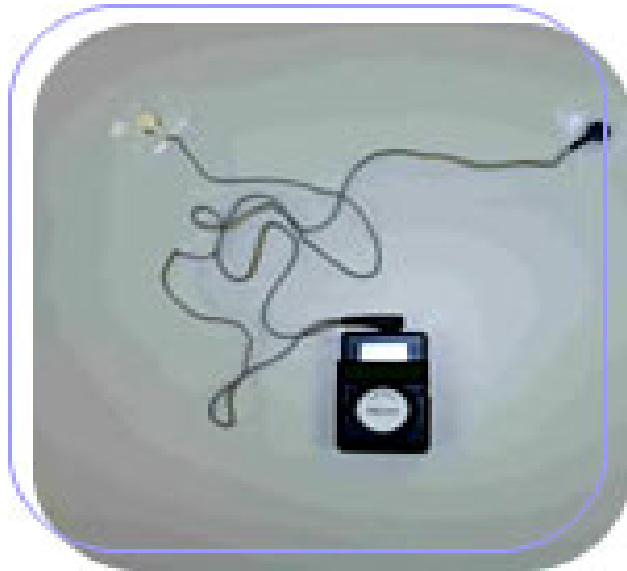


Event Monitors

Event monitors are small devices that are used by patients over a longer period (weeks to months, typically one month). Two sticky patches (electrodes) on the chest connect two wires to the event recorder. The monitor is always on but will only store the patient's rhythm when the patient or caregiver pushes the button.

Most monitors will save the rhythm for several seconds of rhythm before the button is even pushed. The rhythm is also saved for a period after the button is pushed. A few specialized monitors are used only after the patient has symptoms.

The intent is for most event monitors to be worn as much as possible every day to increase the chances of recording the patient's rhythm when he/she has symptoms.



Electrocardiogram

An electrocardiogram — abbreviated as EKG or ECG — is a test that measures the electrical activity of the heartbeat. With each beat, an electrical impulse (or “wave”) travels through the heart. This wave causes the muscle to squeeze and pump blood from the heart. A normal heartbeat on ECG will show the timing of the top and lower chambers.

Why is it done?

An ECG gives two major kinds of information. First, by measuring time intervals on the ECG, a doctor can determine how long the electrical wave takes to pass through the heart. Finding out how long a wave takes to travel from one part of the heart to the next shows if the electrical activity is normal or slow, fast or irregular. Second, by measuring the amount of electrical activity passing through the heart muscle, a cardiologist may be able to find out if parts of the heart are too large or are overworked.

Does it hurt?

No. There’s no pain or risk associated with having an electrocardiogram. When the ECG stickers are removed, there may be some minor discomfort.

