

Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram

What is this test for?

A “dobutamine stress echocardiogram” tests how well your heart and heart valves are working. This test uses a medication, dobutamine, instead of exercise. This medication makes your heart muscle work as if you were exercising.

An echocardiogram uses sound waves (ultrasound) to produce an image of your heart. This image tells us how well your heart is working. If your heart does not work normally, you may have coronary artery disease. The coronary arteries bring blood and oxygen to your heart. If you have coronary artery disease your heart may not be getting enough blood.

We use this test to:

- see how well your heart muscle and valves are working
- determine if you might have coronary artery disease
- evaluate how well your cardiac treatment plan is working

How do I get ready for the test?

- Do not eat or drink anything except water for 2 hours before the test.
- Do not eat or drink anything with caffeine for 24 hours before the test. Caffeine will interfere with the results of the test. For example, do not have coffee, tea, chocolate or energy drinks for 24 hours before your appointment.
- Do not smoke or use nicotine replacement products on the day of the test. Nicotine will also interfere with the results of your test.
- Make arrangements for someone to drive you home. Sometimes we give a medication (atropine) to reverse the effects of the dobutamine. Atropine can affect your vision. If you have atropine you must not drive for at least 12 hours.

Is there any information I should bring?

Before the test we will ask you about your medical history including:

- any allergies
- all medicines you are taking, including vitamins, herbs, eye drops, creams, and over-the-counter medicines
- previous problems you or your family members had with anesthetics
- any blood disorders
- previous surgeries
- medical conditions
- possibility of pregnancy

Should I take my medications before the test?

- Take your medication as directed with water unless instructed otherwise.
- If you are taking a medication that is classified as a beta blocker, stop taking this medication 24 hours before your appointment. The names of these medications end in the letters ‘lol’. For example, metoprolol, atenolol, propranolol, carvedilol are all beta blockers. If you take any of these medications, stop taking it 24 hours before your test. If you are unsure, please ask your health care provider.
- If you wear a nitroglycerin patch, ask your health care provider if the patch should be taken off before the test.
- If you use an inhaler for any breathing condition, bring it with you to the test.

What should I wear for the test?

- You may wear anything that is comfortable for you. Please do not bring anything valuable on the day of the test.

Cardiology Testing Lab (ECG, Holter, Stress Testing)

St. Paul’s Hospital, Room 2450, Providence Wing

Tel: 604-806-8032 Fax: 604-806-8410

Call 604-806-8018 to confirm appointment

What happens during the test?

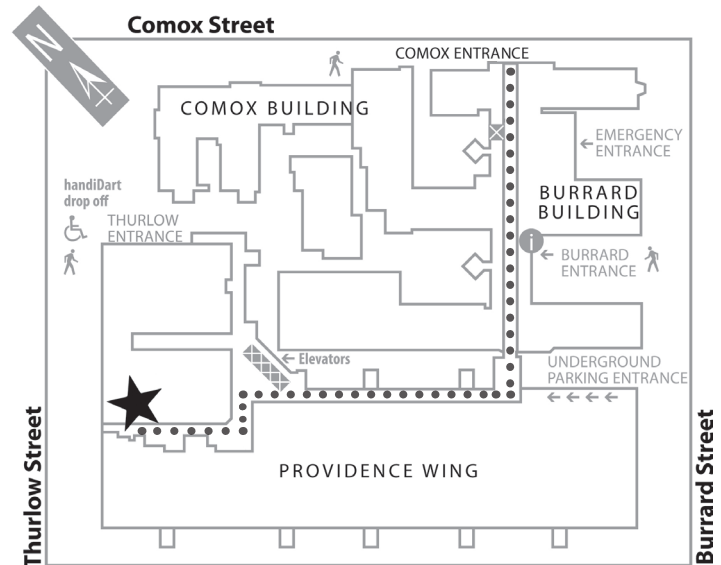
- Your test will take place in the cardiology diagnostic testing lab on the main floor of St. Paul's Hospital (map).
- First you will change into a hospital gown. We will ask you to lie down on a stretcher.
- A cardiac sonographer will place electrodes (small sticky patches) on your chest. We attach the electrodes to a monitor that charts your heart's electrical activity. This monitor is called an 'electrocardiograph'.
- We will insert an intravenous line (IV) into a vein in your arm. We will use this IV to give you the dobutamine for the test.
- We will put a blood pressure cuff on your arm or leg. We will use this to watch your blood pressure while you have the test.
- The sonographer will then take an echocardiogram. This is a picture of your heart's movement created from ultrasound vibrations. To take the echocardiogram, we will place a wand (called a transducer) on your chest. This will allow us to see an outline of the heart's movements. Images will be taken periodically throughout the test.
- The nurse will give you the dobutamine. While this happens, the sonographer will continue to take images of your heart.
- The medication will make your heart react as if you were exercising. Your heart will beat faster and you may feel it beating more strongly.
- At regular intervals, we will ask you how you are feeling. Please tell us right away if you feel chest, arm, or jaw pain or discomfort, shortness of breath, dizzy, light-headed or any other unusual symptoms.
- Once the test is finished we will take the IV out. Your heart rate should return to normal in about 5 to 10 minutes.

How long does the test take?

Your appointment will take about one hour. We may ask you to stay on the unit for another 30 minutes after the test is finished. You need to stay until all the symptoms you experienced are gone.

How do I get the results of my test?

After a cardiologist reviews your test results, your family doctor will have get the results and will discuss them with you. It takes about a week for your family doctor to receive the results.



★ **Cardiology Testing Lab**
St. Paul's Hospital, Room 2450, Providence Wing

What are the risks and complications of this test?

Generally, this is a safe procedure. However, as with any procedure, complications can occur. Possible complications during the test can include:

- dizziness or lightheadedness
- shortness of breath
- increased or irregular heartbeat
- nausea or vomiting
- heart attack (rare)

as well as pain or pressure in certain areas:

- chest
- jaw or neck
- between your shoulder blades
- radiating down your left arm

After the procedure

We will monitor your heart rate and blood pressure after the test.

If you have been given atropine, you may not drive for at least 12 hours. Do not drive until your vision is normal again. Sometimes this takes more than 12 hours.

After the test you can go back to your normal schedule unless your health care provider tells you otherwise. This includes food, activity, and medicines.

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This material has been reviewed and approved by patients, families and staff.

