



## EXERCISE STRESS TEST

This test requires you to exercise on a treadmill while your heart rhythm is continuously monitored with an electrocardiogram (ECG). This test will take approximately *45 minutes to one hour* (including getting you hooked up, explaining the test and monitoring you after exercise).

### IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR A STRESS TEST:

- **Do not** have anything to **eat or drink** for *three hours* before the study. Regularly scheduled medicines generally should be taken (including within the three hours prior to the study with a sip of water) unless you are specifically told not to by your doctor. Diabetics should discuss with their doctor about their diabetic medications, insulin and eating prior to the test.
- **Wear** or bring **comfortable clothing and rubber-soled shoes**.
- You will be asked to sign a [consent](#) form (see below, page 3).

**Exercise Stress Testing** involves exercising on a treadmill while you are closely monitored with an electrocardiogram (ECG). The exercise difficulty (both speed and incline or elevation) increases during the test usually every three minutes. The test is used to:

- determine how well your heart tolerates activity and your level of fitness
- evaluate the function of your heart and valves
- determine your likelihood of having coronary artery disease (blocked arteries);  
and
- evaluate the effectiveness of your cardiac treatment plan.

When felt appropriate by your physician or cardiologist, imaging of the heart can be combined with the ECG monitoring to gain additional information (see [Exercise Stress Echo](#) and [Myocardial Perfusion Imaging](#)). For patients who cannot walk on a treadmill, we can arrange for non-exercise (pharmacological stress test) protocols.

Please have nothing to eat or drink after midnight if your study is before 11:00 in the morning. If your study is scheduled for 11:00 or later you may have a light breakfast before 7:00 AM.

**Please take your usual medications unless instructed by your physician.**

**NOTE: Do not discontinue any medication without first talking with your physician.**

### **What should I wear the day of the test?**

Wear *comfortable clothes* such as you would exercise or go to the gym with. Bring *shoes* suitable for *walking*. Do not bring valuables.

### **What happens during the test?**

Your exercise stress test will take place in the Stress Lab. First, a technician or nurse will gently rub ten small areas on your chest and place electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) on these areas. The electrodes are attached to an electrocardiograph monitor (EKG) that charts your heart's electrical activity during the test. Before you start exercising, the technician will perform a resting EKG, measure your resting heart rate and take your blood pressure. Under the supervision of your doctor, the lab personnel will ask you to start exercising and gradually increase your rate of exercise. You will be asked to exercise very hard until you are exhausted. At regular intervals, the lab personnel or doctor will ask how you are feeling. Please tell them if you feel chest, arm or jaw pain or discomfort, short of breath, dizzy, lightheaded or if you have any other unusual symptoms. The lab personnel will watch for any changes on the EKG monitor that suggest the test should be stopped. Please inform the staff when you think you can only go another 15-20 seconds and they will begin slowing down the machine. Your heart rate, blood pressure and EKG will continue to be monitored after exercising until the levels are returning to normal.

### **How will I feel during the test?**

You will be encouraged to exercise until you are exhausted. It is normal for your heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and perspiration to increase. This information will allow your physician to assess your heart's ability to function. As you stop exercising suddenly, it is normal to feel a little unsteady when getting off the treadmill. If echo imaging of the heart is not being performed, we will encourage you to "cool down" by walking very slowly for a minute or so at the end. If you begin to notice chest discomfort, excessive shortness of breath, lightheadedness, irregular heart beats or other symptoms of concern, tell the stress lab personnel immediately.

### **How long does the test take?**

The appointment will take about 45 minutes although individuals can exercise on the treadmill from anywhere between 2 minutes to 15 minutes depending on age and level of fitness.

For more on stress testing visit:



<http://www.cardiosmart.org/HeartDisease/CTT.aspx?id=890>

If you have any questions about the above test that your doctor has recommended for you or you are scheduled for, please feel free to call our office at (310) 659-0714 or visit our website at [www.CORMedicalGroup.com](http://www.CORMedicalGroup.com)

Thank you

## CONSENT FOR TREADMILL STRESS TEST

The exercise treadmill stress test is a tremendously useful way to assess the condition of your heart and circulatory system. It is a very routine and safe test. However, extremely rare potential complications, while highly unlikely, are possible and you should be aware of this possibility. These include (but are not limited to) irregular heart beats (arrhythmia), heart attack, cardiac arrest, or muscular or skeletal injuries.

A physician is in attendance in the office during all exercise stress tests to help insure the highest degree of safety.

Your signing of this form indicates that you have read and understand the above, feel you have had all your questions and concerns answered and agree to proceed with the test.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_