

MonashHeart, Monash Health is committed to providing outstanding cardiac services for cardiac patients of all ages

- ♥ Every 10 minutes, an Australian dies from cardiovascular disease making it the biggest killer of all Australians
- ♥ MonashHeart treats more acute heart attack patients than anywhere else in Victoria
- ♥ Each year MonashHeart treats over 7000 patients with acute heart problems, the most in Victoria
- ♥ MonashHeart operates one of the busiest cardiac CT scanners in the world
- ♥ MonashHeart is the only cardiac service in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania to treat heart patients of all ages; from pre birth to our senior citizens
- ♥ MonashHeart is an internationally and nationally recognised leader in cardiovascular research
- ♥ Nearly one in 100 children in Australia are born with a heart defect. Congenital heart disease accounts for 50 of childhood lethal malformations.



Fundraising Manager  
Monash Health  
Locked Bag 29  
Clayton South 3169

## How do I prepare?

- ♥ Read the instruction sheet sent to you with your appointment letter and make sure that you follow the medication instructions. Please bring a list of your medications with you on the day. If you have any concerns about your medications please discuss this with your local doctor.
- ♥ We advise that you avoid caffeine products (cola, chocolate products, tea or coffee) for 2 hours before the test. You are not required to fast for this test – you may have a light meal and drinks a couple of hours before the test.
- ♥ Do not smoke for 4 hours before the test.
- ♥ If you use an inhaler for breathing, please bring it to the test.
- ♥ Wear comfortable clothes and shoes suitable for walking.



## When does my Doctor get my results?

Your referring doctor will receive the results in five to seven working days. An additional copy of the results may be sent to any other doctors who are involved in your care at your request.

If you have any further questions or concerns about your upcoming exercise stress echocardiogram, please talk to your local doctor. On the day of the test the technologist and/or cardiologist will be more than happy to discuss all aspects of the procedure with you.

## Some useful websites

**MonashHeart**  
[www.monashheart.org.au](http://www.monashheart.org.au)

**Patient Information**  
[www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)



Please use this space to write down any questions you may have:

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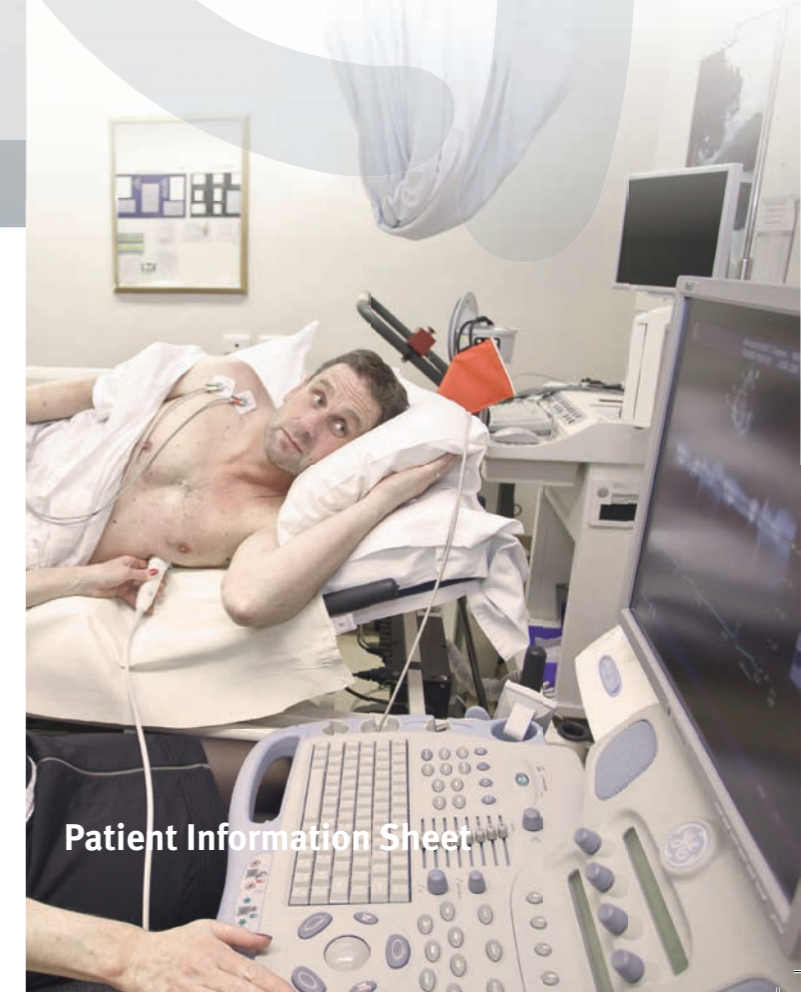
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## Exercise Stress Echocardiogram



Patient Information Sheet

## What is an Exercise Stress Echocardiogram?

 An exercise stress echocardiogram is a non-invasive echocardiogram performed before and after exercise (walking on a treadmill) that allows your doctor to assess how your heart responds to exercise. If you're unable to exercise, you may have an injection of a medication to make your heart work as hard as if you were exercising.

An echocardiogram uses sound waves to produce images of your heart. An echo technologist spreads gel on your chest and then presses a device known as a transducer firmly against your skin, aiming an ultrasound beam through your chest to your heart. The transducer records the sound wave echoes that your heart produces. A computer converts the echoes into moving images on a monitor. If your lungs or ribs obscure the view, a small amount of intravenous dye may be used to improve the images.



## Why do I need a Stress Echocardiogram?

Your doctor uses the exercise stress echo to:

- ♥ Determine how well your heart tolerates activity
- ♥ Evaluate the function of your heart and valves
- ♥ Determine your likelihood of having coronary artery disease (blocked arteries)
- ♥ Evaluate the effectiveness of your cardiac treatment plan

## What can I expect?

Your echocardiogram will be performed in the MonashHeart Echo Department by a highly qualified echo technologist. After undressing from the waist up, you will be asked to lie on an examining table or bed. The technologist will attach sticky patches (electrodes) to your body to monitor your heart rate. The echo technologist will then take images of your heart before exercise (resting images).



During the echocardiogram, the technologist will dim the lights to better view the image on the monitor. You may hear a pulsing "whoosh" sound, which is the machine recording the blood flowing through your heart. You may be asked to breathe in a certain way or to roll onto your left side. Sometimes the transducer must be held very firmly against your chest. This can be uncomfortable but it helps the technologist produce the best images of your heart.



The resting images will be checked by a cardiologist before you start walking on the treadmill. The treadmill is programmed to get faster and steeper every three minutes. You will be asked to walk for as long as possible to increase your heart rate (usually between seven and 12 minutes). If you feel unwell during the test you must inform the doctor or the technologist who will then stop the test when safe to do so. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored throughout the test.

When you have walked for long enough, the treadmill will stop and you will be moved quickly onto the examination bed so more echo images can be taken. The lights will be dimmed again and the technologist or doctor may ask you to hold your breath while they are taking the images. It may be difficult to do, but do your best so that we can get the best images possible. The cardiologist will then compare the resting with the stress echo images.

Once the stress images are taken and your heart rate has returned to normal, the gel is wiped off and the electrodes are removed.

## What are the risks?

Walking vigorously on the treadmill may temporarily cause an irregular heartbeat. Serious complications, such as a heart attack, are rare. There are no known risks associated with the echocardiogram. You may feel some discomfort similar to pulling off an adhesive bandage when the technologist removes the electrodes placed on your chest during the procedure.



**I support MonashHeart, Monash Health in providing leading care to cardiac patients of all ages.**

(Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible ABN 82 142 080 338)

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