

## STRESS ECHO TEST

A stress echocardiogram test is a type of exercise stress test used to help detect coronary artery disease (CAD) and other potential heart conditions. Basically it is an ultrasound of the heart.

This type of test is used to provide information about how the heart responds to exertion. To do that, the test is performed just before and just after exercise.

The part of the test performed *before exercise* is used to create a baseline of the heart's activity. The part of the test performed *after exercise* shows the motion of the heart's walls and pumping action when the heart is stressed. This may reveal a lack of blood flow that isn't always apparent on resting heart tests.



### How it Works

1. Gel or oil is applied to the skin. This helps transmit the sound waves.
2. A small, handheld instrument called a **transducer** is passed back and forth over the heart. The transducer sends out high-pitched sound waves (above the range of human hearing) that are then sent back to the transducer. Because the transducer is held in the operator's hand and moved around the chest, the test must be performed by a highly skilled technician. This will help ensure a good result.
3. A computer analyzes the sound waves and converts them into a picture that is displayed on a TV screen. The picture produced by ultrasound is called a **sonogram**, **echogram**, or **ultrasound scan**.
4. The same procedure is repeated again, after exercise.
5. Pictures or videos of the images may be made for a permanent record.

### Benefits

The stress echo test is a non-invasive diagnostic test. You or your loved one will not be exposed to any radiation. It is also fairly inexpensive compared to some other cardiac imaging tests. The stress echo test is a good first test for many people who are at low or intermediate risk of having coronary artery disease (CAD).