

Cardiology Department
Emergency Care & Medical Services



Information for Patients

Information about Exercise Tolerance Test (ETT)



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What is an Exercise Tolerance Test ?

An exercise tolerance test is also known as a 'stress test' or 'treadmill test'. This is like an ECG (heart trace), that records the activity of your heart as you make it work harder, by walking or running on a treadmill. The heart trace will be monitored by a cardiac physiologist.

Why is it done?

It gives your doctor information about how your heart performs during exercise and gives important information about blood flow to your heart that may not be seen on an ordinary ECG.

How is it done?

Before the Test:

- Do not eat a heavy meal
- Do not use body cream, lotion or talc

Please wear loose fitting clothes and sensible walking shoes. You should also bring any medication that you are taking. If you use a GTN spray please bring it with you.

- You will be given a gown and asked to undress from the waist up.
- The cardiac physiologist will prepare your skin, apply electrodes to your chest and make some recordings before the exercise is started.

- Sometimes men may have to have small areas of their chest shaved.
- A blood pressure monitor will record your blood pressure at regular times during the test.

The exercise is usually done on a treadmill. The speed and inclination (slope) of the treadmill will change during the test, so you will feel as if you are walking faster and up a hill.

During the test if you feel that you have to stop, please tell the cardiac physiologist. Do not at any time jump off the machine as you could hurt yourself. The test will take approximately 20 minutes.

Remember, if you have any questions or worries speak to the physiologist, who is happy to help. The results will be sent to the doctor who asked for the test.