

# What You Need To Know About Your Dobutamine Echocardiogram



IH-III-44  
R. D. 11/03  
Pg. 1 of 2

*Cardiovascular Services*

## What is a Dobutamine Echocardiogram?

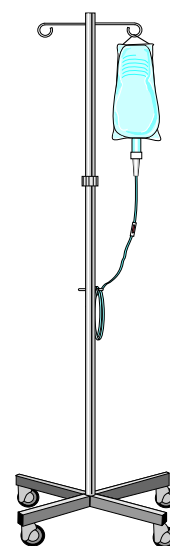
An Echocardiogram is a sound wave test of your heart that shows the heart muscle moving as it pumps blood. Dobutamine is a drug which makes your heart work harder. A dobutamine Echocardiogram is a test to study how your heart handles hard work.

## How is the test done?

This test is a type of stress test. Usually, stress tests are done by having you exercise on a treadmill or bicycle to make your heart work harder. Instead of having you exercise, we make your heart work harder by giving you a drug called Dobutamine. It will be given to you through your vein. This drug is like the natural chemical in your body that causes your heart to work harder. You will need to take off your clothes from the waist up, wear a hospital gown and lie down on a bed for this test.

## What happens during the test?

Dobutamine is given to you slowly and you will be checked carefully. When the drug is stopped, it quickly leaves your body. Dobutamine does not by itself cause damage to your heart. However, because it causes your heart to work harder, Dobutamine can cause chest pain, shortness of breath, skipped or pounding heart beats. Dobutamine can also make your face hot and red, and you may feel dizzy. These symptoms go away shortly after the drug is stopped.



**(over)**

## **How is the doctor able to see my heart work?**

Before we begin giving the dobutamine, the doctor will check your EKG (heart rhythm), and your Echocardiogram. Your heart rate and blood pressure are also checked. As the drug is given to you, your heart rate, EKG, Echocardiogram and blood pressure are taken every three minutes. The doctor or Physician Assistant (PA) can tell how well your heart is working by looking at the tests. The doctor will also ask you if you are having any symptoms, such as chest pain or dizziness. It is normal to feel your heart beating harder and faster. You may also feel like taking deeper breaths because we are making your heart work harder.

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

The test can take 1 to 1½ hours.

## **What do I need to do before and after the test?**

Do not eat or drink for three hours before your test. Take your medicine as you normally would unless your doctor asks you not to do so. You may sip a small amount of water to take your medicine. **If you are diabetic**, tell the doctor or PA before you start the test. When the test is finished, the doctor or PA will watch you about ten minutes as your heart rate returns to normal.

## **How will I get the results of the test?**

- A Cardiologist (heart doctor) will check your test and send the results to your doctor.
- If you are a clinic patient, your doctor will tell you the results at your next visit.