

Exercise Stress Test

Why have I been referred for an Exercise Test?

There are several reasons why people are invited to come for this test.

These include:

- To see if the heart has to struggle to get enough oxygen when it is asked to work harder (this condition is sometimes called 'angina').
- To see if medication is working as it should do.
- To assess how well the heart is after a heart attack.
- To screen for any possible future problems, particularly if there is a family history of heart disease.

Is there anything I need to do or bring for the test?

It is important to wear comfortable clothing and flat shoes.

The doctor may want you to stop some of your medication for a time before the test, since some medications can interfere with the results.

If this applies to you, the name(s) of the medication you need to stop will be written on the enclosed letter. Do not stop your medication unless you are specifically asked to do so.

Please bring an up-to-date list of any medication you are taking – a recent prescription will be sufficient.

Please do not smoke for at least 2 hours before the test. Unfortunately a relative or friend cannot accompany you into the room during the test.

What will I be asked to do?

The test may be supervised by a Cardiac Physiologist (a specialist in this type of test) or a doctor.

Other members of staff may also be present, who could be male or female.

You will be asked to remove the clothing above your waist. Bras will need to be removed but you will be provided with a gown for the test.

You will be fitted with a monitor that records your heartbeat, and a blood pressure cuff will be put on your arm. You will then be asked to walk at a steady pace on the treadmill.

The physiologist will adjust the speed and incline of the treadmill every 3 minutes in order to increase your heart rate.

You will be asked to let the physiologist know of any symptoms you may develop, and the test can be stopped at any point if you become uncomfortable.

How long you are on the treadmill is dependent upon your fitness, age, and the results obtained. You should expect to be at the hospital for about 30 minutes in total, this includes being prepared for the test, the test itself and then a few minutes to recover.

As a teaching hospital, we have a commitment to training and education and this may mean a student could be observing, or assisting with your test.

If you have any objections to this, please let a member of staff know prior to the test.

What are the risks and benefits of the test?

This is a relatively simple test that can provide a great deal of accurate information about the health of your heart.

Your consultant will then be able to appropriately direct any further treatment, prescribe relevant medication, or simply put your mind at ease that there is nothing to worry about.

The test is very safe and complications are very rare. But, as with any medical procedure, it does carry a very small risk, this could be a rhythm disturbance or heart attack.

Be assured that the physiologist who is performing your test is appropriately trained and that the department is fully equipped to deal with such a situation, should it occur.

What results will the test give and will I get the results on the day?

The results generated by the test tell the doctor how well your heart can cope with exercise.

The exact information the doctor needs depends on the reason why you were referred. For most patients, the results will not be available on the day.

The results and any possible further treatment will be discussed with you at your next appointment with the consultant or by letter.

Contact details for Cardio-Respiratory Departments:

Doncaster Royal Infirmary

Tel: 01302 642456.

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Bassetlaw Hospital

Tel: 01909 572761.

Monday to Friday 8.00am to 4.30pm.

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This information may be available in other languages and formats, on request.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The team are available to help with any concerns/complaints you may have about your experience at the Trust. Their office is in the Main Foyer (Gate 4) of Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Contact can be made either in person or by telephone 8.30am till 5.30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) or via email.

Their contact details are:

Telephone: 01302 642764 or 0800 028 8059. Email: dbth.pals.dbh@nhs.net

