



Niagara Health is pleased to provide you with general information about your upcoming exam.

## WHAT IS AN EXERCISE STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM (ECHO)?

An exercise stress echo is a test where pictures of the heart are taken before the highest heart rate, at the highest heart rate, and while recovering after reaching the highest heart rate while riding a stationary recumbent bicycle. The test is used to assess heart function with exercise and determine how well blood and oxygen get through the arteries to the heart muscle.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST?

- Many people find it uncomfortable to exercise on a full stomach so we ask that you **do not** have a large meal two hours before the test. You may have fluids and small snacks in this time period.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing, as well as running shoes or good walking shoes.
- Continue to take your usual medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Please bring a list of your current medications.

## HOW LONG IS THE TEST?

The test takes approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE TEST?

- You will be given a complete explanation of the test and the possibility of requiring an injection of an Echo enhancer will be explained with time for questions. You will be asked to sign written consent to begin the test.
- There will be a sonographer and ECG technician in the room. The Cardiologist will be present during the exercise portion of the test.
- The ECG technician will place electrodes on your chest—your heart rhythm and blood pressure will be monitored throughout.
- The sonographer will take images of your heart at various times.

- The staff will familiarize you with the recumbent bike. The pedaling difficulty will increase every two minutes until a target has been reached. A target is based on your heart rate and your blood pressure; your blood pressure will be taken every two minutes. For optimal imaging, and injection of imaging contrast may be administered. If required, the Physician will give the injection of the Enhancing agent at peak exercise.
- After the test is completed you will be monitored by the ECG Technician until your heart rate and blood pressure return to your pretest level.

## HOW DO I GET THE RESULTS?

- The test will be read and reported by a cardiologist, and that report will go to your doctor. The results are not immediately available; the images and data need to be carefully examined and interpreted by the Cardiologist.
- The results of the test will be given to you by the referring physician or your family doctor.