

Guide to Cardiopulmonary Exercise Test

You are scheduled to have a cardiopulmonary exercise test. Please enter the Starr Pavilion at 520 E. 70th Street. Take the elevator to the 4th floor, turn left off the elevator and enter the offices of the Division of Cardiology (Rm ST-443). Please check in at the front desk.

A cardiopulmonary stress test evaluates your heart and lung capacity to perform exercise. A Nurse Practitioner or Physician will apply 10-12 electrodes to your upper body for recording the electrocardiogram. Thereafter you will be asked to place a breathing device (pneumotach) into your mouth; this apparatus will be secured using a headpiece. You will be asked to either walk on a treadmill or pedal on a bicycle for approximately 5-15 minutes, or walk up and down a single step for 3 minutes. During this time your heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, electrocardiogram and respiratory gas exchange will be recorded. You will be supervised at all times by a Nurse Practitioner and Physician.

Patient Preparation

- **Attire:** Wear loose, comfortable clothing that is suitable for exercise. You should also wear sneakers or walking shoes. We will not be able to safely perform the test with bare feet.
- **Medications:** Please take all your medications at the usual times. The exception to this is medication for diabetes. Please check with your doctor about holding any diabetes medicines until after the test is finished.
- **Meals:** Do not eat or drink three hours prior to the test. Do not have any caffeine the day of the test.

Please remove nail polish prior to arrival. Please do not wear lipstick the day of the test.

Fees

Most insurance plans cover this test. If there is any concern about this (e.g. pre-certification), please call them in advance or call our office to check this.

If you have any questions or need to change your appointment, please call 212-746-2381

What happens before the test begins?

To make sure you are able to have the test, you will receive a physical exam and will be asked questions about your past and present health by our staff physician before testing. The test will be explained to you and your questions will be answered. We will tell you about the equipment and show you how to use it. A signed consent form is needed before the test is started.

How is the test done?

A blood pressure cuff is placed on your arm. Small adhesive pads called electrodes are placed on your chest and attached to an electrocardiogram (ECG) machine. A pulse oximeter (a small plastic clip) is put on your finger or earlobe to monitor the oxygen level in

your blood. Another clip is placed on your nose to keep air from leaking out during the exercise. A mouthpiece is placed between your lips and teeth. The mouthpiece is connected to a monitor. You will then walk on a treadmill, pedal a stationary bike or walk up and down a single step while you breathe through the mouthpiece into the monitor. For testing on the bike, as you pedal we slowly and steadily increase the resistance to make you work harder; on the treadmill incline and speed are increased.

While you exercise we measure the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the air you exhale (breathe out). Your heart rate, its rhythm and your blood pressure are recorded and you are constantly monitored during the test.

We closely watch you for any complications. Emergency equipment and trained staff are on hand to care for you if complications occur. If you have chest discomfort, headache, nausea, anxiety, dizziness, heart palpitations, shortness of breath or tired legs, please tell us.

What else do I need to know?

This bicycle and treadmill tests take about one hour. The step test takes about 30 minutes. When it is finished, your blood pressure and ECG are monitored while you rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

The test results are read within 24 hours. Any serious matter will be reported to your doctor immediately. You may receive the results at your next visit or sooner if needed. You will probably have sore, stiff muscles for one or two days after the test.

Call your doctor or go to the emergency room if you have:

- Chest pain/discomfort
- Palpitations
- Increased shortness of breath
- Dizziness, nausea, vomiting

If you have any questions, please call your doctor or call the Center at 212-746-2381.

This information is brief and general. It should not be the only source of your information on this health care topic. It is not to be used or relied on for diagnosis or treatment. It does not take the place of instructions from your doctor. Talk to your health care providers before making a health care decision.

✉ Contact

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