

## **Exercise Stress Test**

*Exercise stress testing is a procedure used by doctors to measure the performance and capacity of the heart, lungs and blood vessels during exercise. A common type of exercise stress test involves using an electrocardiogram (ECG) to record electrical signals from your heart during exercise. Alternatively, an echocardiogram may be used instead of an ECG.*

If you are having an ECG exercise stress test, you will have several electrodes attached to your arms, legs and chest. You will then be asked to walk on a treadmill. The speed and gradient (steepness) of the treadmill will be increased every few minutes. The test will be stopped if you develop symptoms such as severe fatigue, breathlessness, tired legs or chest pain. If at any time during the test you feel unwell, you need to tell the doctor immediately.

Throughout the test, and for some time after the test finishes, a doctor will monitor your pulse and blood pressure as well as the electrocardiogram. If the doctor is concerned about any changes observed during the test, it will be stopped early.

### **Why is it done?**

*Exercise stress testing is commonly used by doctors to help them make a diagnosis in people with suspected heart disease. Exercise stress testing may also be carried out in people known to have heart disease to help identify those people at highest risk, to assess the progress of their heart disease, to assess the effect that a particular treatment (e.g. coronary angioplasty) is having, or to assess the person's capacity to undertake physical activity safely.*

### ***What do I need to do to prepare for the test?***

Any type of exercise stress test will involve you doing some exercise. Therefore, you need to wear comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for walking or cycling.