

Stress Test

You Have An Appointment For A Stress Test:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location:

Belmond

Clarion

**For questions or more information,
call 641-444-5671 for Belmond
or 515-532-9351 for Clarion.**



Iowa Specialty Hospital

Specializing in You

Locations

Belmond

403 1st Street Southeast
Belmond, Iowa 50421
Phone: (641) 444-3500

Clarion

1316 South Main Street
Clarion, Iowa 50525
Phone: (515) 532-2811

844-ISH-4321

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What is a Stress Test?

A stress test allows doctors to learn how well our heart functions when it is made to work harder. This test can help detect heart problems that may not be apparent at rest. The exercise ECG test is done while you walk on a treadmill. During the test, an ECG records the electrical activity of your heart, and blood pressure will be taken intermittently.

It is normal to feel tired and short of breath during strenuous exercise. However, if you develop chest pain or become extremely short of breath, this may indicate a heart problem. The heart rate and blood pressure normally rise during exercise. An abnormal heart rate or a fall in blood pressure may indicate heart disease.

What Does an ECG Show?

Certain changes in the ECG tracing may indicate that the heart muscle is not getting enough oxygen-rich blood. Sometimes, the ECG during exercise shows abnormal heart rhythms.

This test is especially useful in diagnosing blockages in the coronary arteries. When the coronary arteries are blocked or narrowed, the heart muscle may not be getting enough oxygen during exercises. This often results in symptoms of angina (chest pain) and abnormal changes on the ECG.

Is it Safe?

The exercise test is generally safe. A small amount of risk does exist, however, because the heart is stressed, it may result in rhythm changes. Experienced personnel are available to handle any emergency.

The Results

The doctor conducting the test may be able to give you preliminary results before you leave. A complete interpretation may take several days.

If the test is abnormal or inconclusive, your doctor may order additional tests.

The information gained from the exercise test helps your doctor make an accurate diagnosis and develop a treatment plan that's best for you.

What Happens During the Test?

The exercise ECG test will be performed in the Cardiopulmonary area of the hospital. A trained technician will place several electrodes on your chest to allow recording of the ECG during exercise. The electrodes are connected by wires to an ECG machine. A cuff will be applied to your arm to monitor your blood pressure.

Your blood pressure will be checked every few minutes, and the ECG will be carefully watched for abnormal changes. You will be instructed to report any symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, leg fatigue, or dizziness. The test may end when you become too tired to continue or when you experience significant symptoms. Other times, the test may be stopped when you reach your peak heart rate.

Preparing for the Test

DO NOT EAT OR DRINK FOR 3 HOURS PRIOR TO THE TEST.

This will prevent the possibility of nausea, which may accompany vigorous exercise after eating. If you are diabetic and take medications for diabetes, get special instruction from your doctor.

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY TAKING ANY HEART MEDICATIONS, CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR.

He or she may ask you to stop certain medications a day or two before the test. This can help get more accurate test results.

WEAR LOOSE, COMFORTABLE CLOTHING THAT IS SUITABLE FOR EXERCISE.

Men usually don't wear a shirt during the test, and women generally wear a lightweight blouse or a hospital gown. You should also wear comfortable walking shoes or sneakers.

SEVERAL ELECTRODES WILL BE PLACED ON YOUR CHEST.

These will be used to obtain an electrocardiogram, a recording of your heart's electrical activity. A blood pressure cuff will be applied to your arm.