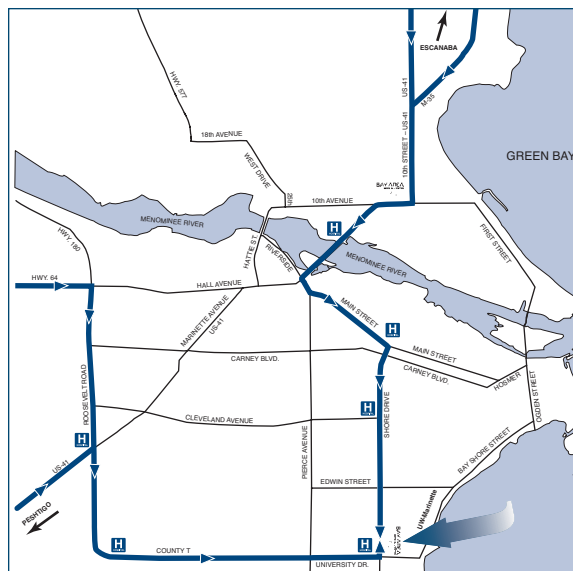


Welcome

Your doctor has scheduled you for a Stress Test at Bay Area Medical Center.

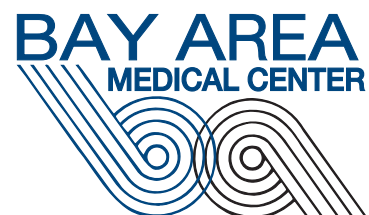
This brochure should answer most of the questions you may have concerning your test. If you have further questions, feel free to call our department staff at 735-6621, extension 3323.

Your appointment is scheduled for:



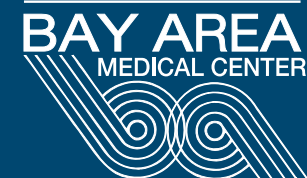
STRESS TESTS

*BAMC Patient's Guide
to Stress Tests*



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Understanding Stress Tests

What is a Stress Test?

A Stress Test is a special type of test that measures the heart's tolerance for exercise and detects various forms of heart disease. The most common form of stress test combines exercise with an electrocardiogram (EKG) to measure the heart's activity both at rest and with exertion.

Even if your heart functions well at rest, the blood supply to your heart may not be sufficient to meet its needs when the workload is increased. This test is noninvasive and generally safe and painless.

Stress testing can be done alone or combined with nuclear imaging, using a radioactive substance, known as a tracer, to produce images of the heart with a scan. The method can help determine if areas of the heart are not receiving enough blood.

For patients who cannot exercise adequately, the stress test can be performed using a drug called Adenosine or Persantine. These drugs produce an effect on the heart similar to exercise.

Other stress test options include the use of Echocardiogram, a test that combines an ultrasound study of the heart with an exercise test. This test allows doctors to learn how the heart functions when it is made to work harder. The doctor compares the movement of the heart both at rest and with exertion.

For patients **who are unable to exercise adequately**, the echocardiogram can be combined with Dobutamine, a drug that has an effect on the heart similar to exercise.

What should I do before coming in for my Stress Test?

Dress comfortably: tennis/walking shoes, short-sleeved top (no metal buttons), and pants. **Women:** please do not wear an underwire bra, full-torso girdle, or pantyhose.

If you are on beta-blockers (blood pressure medication) or are diabetic, please check with your doctor as to whether you should take your medication the day of the test.

Do not eat or drink anything with **caffeine** (coffee, tea, soda, cocoa, chocolate) for 24 hours before the test. (Do not drink decaffeinated versions either.)

Do not use **tobacco** in any form the morning of the test.

Eat a light breakfast (example: toast and juice or cereal and milk).

Is a Stress Test and/or a Nuclear Scan a safe procedure?

A Stress Test is a safe procedure. A small amount of risk does exist, however, because the exertion stresses the heart. Possible rare complications include abnormal heart rhythms or heart attack. Experienced staff are available to handle any emergency. The radiation exposure during the nuclear scan is small, and the doses used are safe. However, if you are pregnant, suspect you may be, or are a nursing mother, be sure to let your doctor know.

How long will the Stress Test take?

If you are having just an exercise Stress Test or a Stress Echo, you should **arrive 45 minutes before your test** and expect to spend a **total of 1-1/2 to 2 hours** at the hospital.

If you are having a Stress Test with nuclear imaging or a Dobutamine Echo, you will need to **arrive 90 minutes before your test time** and **allow 2-1/2 to 4 hours for the total test**. This time includes time for the preparation, exercise, and imaging portions of the test.

How do I find out about my Stress Test results?

The doctor supervising your Stress Test will discuss the EKG or Echo results with you.

If you have nuclear imaging, a Radiologist or Cardiologist will review the resting and exercise scans, then send a report to the physician who ordered your Stress Test – usually within 2 days. Your physician will discuss those results with you during a future office visit.

How will I be billed for this?

We will bill your insurance company directly. Please bring your insurance card with you and your physician order on the day of your test.

What if I have to cancel my appointment?

Cancellations are sometimes unavoidable; however, we ask that you notify us one day in advance whenever possible. This courtesy assists the staff in daily scheduling of other patients who may be waiting for an appointment.