

Answers to Common Concerns About Cardiac Stress Testing

Having a cardiac stress test is probably not your idea of a good time. You may even be feeling a bit nervous about it. That's understandable.

To help ease your mind, focus on this: A cardiac stress test can help your healthcare provider identify a heart problem and better plan treatment for it. Afterward, you'll be on your way to feeling better!

Knowing what to expect with this procedure can also help you feel less anxious and better prepared. Here are the facts behind some common concerns about cardiac stress testing.

Is it safe? Most procedures have some risks. The good news here is that cardiac stress testing has very few risks. They depend mainly on how the test is done.

Like, if you need medicine to raise your heart rate, you may have side effects such as a headache, nausea, or vomiting. Or if you have a dye injected into your veins for imaging, you may be worried about an allergic reaction.

Keep in mind, these side effects are rare. Your care team has done lots of these tests and knows exactly how to keep you safe.

You can do your part, too, by following all instructions, like not drinking coffee and other caffeinated drinks a few hours beforehand.

What if I have chest pain? During this test, your heart rate will be elevated. So there is a chance that you may have symptoms like chest pain or shortness of breath. If that's the case, speak up!

Your care team can promptly treat any problems. Remember, too, they'll be monitoring your health closely during the test and will stop it right away, if needed.

What happens if they find a heart problem?

Cardiac stress testing is a good first step in diagnosing many heart problems, such as coronary heart disease. If the results suggest you may have a problem, you'll likely need more testing.

Now, nobody wants to hear they may have a heart problem. But the sooner you and your healthcare provider know what's causing your symptoms, the sooner you'll have a plan in place to help you feel better.

Plus, getting a cardiac stress test now may help prevent a more serious problem, like a heart attack, in the future. And that's definitely a good thing!

Still have questions or concerns? Your care team is here to help. Get in touch to learn more about all you can do to make sure your test goes smoothly.