Service: Cardiology

Exercise Tolerance Testing
This leaflet explains what an Exercise Tolerance Test is and how it is performed.

What is an Exercise Tolerance Test?
A recording of your electrocardiogram (ECG) that is taken whilst you are walking on a treadmill. The test is designed to detect any changes in your heart function between when you are resting and when you are exercising.

Why do I need to have this test?
Your doctor has requested that you have this simple non-invasive test in order to see how well your heart works when you are active.

How should I prepare for my test?
We advise you to wear comfortable clothing and footwear for the test.
Please do not wear a full-length slip or dress.
You are also advised not to eat a heavy meal or smoke before the test.

What happens during the test?
The attending Physiologist will ask you to undress to the waist (you can use a gown if required), and you will be fitted with 10 ECG electrodes. An ECG and blood pressure reading will then be taken. You will be asked to walk on the treadmill while the Physiologist records a further series of ECGs and blood pressure readings.
As you may have experienced some type of chest discomfort with your present illness/complaint, this test may induce a similar response. If you do experience any of your symptoms during the test it is important to let the attending Physiologist know immediately.

Are there any risks involved with this test?

The risk of death or serious complications such as heart attack during this test is approximately 1 in 10,000 (0.01%). The risk of a serious heart rhythm disturbance during this test is approximately 1 in 5000 (0.02%). All necessary safety precautions and procedures are always in place.

After the test

When/how will I receive the results of the test?

The results will be passed onto the doctor who requested the test. You are usually told the results at your next clinic appointment or a letter may be sent to your GP.

What will happen if I do not want to have this test?

If you do not have this test we will not be able to pass important diagnostic information to the doctors. This may affect the medical treatment that you receive.

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at: www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution
How to contact us:

www.nbt.nhs.uk/cardiology

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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