

Illinois Heart & Lung Associates - Patient Services

Graded Exercise Test

What is a Graded Exercise Test?

The graded exercise test is an exercise test designed to determine the presence or absence of heart disease, to evaluate the effectiveness of your current therapy, and/or to determine your fitness level.



Preparation

- You may eat lightly at least 2 hours prior to the test.
- No caffeine, nicotine, or alcohol should be consumed within 4 hours of the test time.
- On the day of your test, please bring a list of all medications (and the dosages) you are currently taking.
- Your physician may ask you to withhold some medications prior to testing. Discuss this with your physician prior to the day of the test.
- Wear comfortable, flat walking shoes. Tennis shoes or running shoes are preferred.
- You should wear comfortable, loose-fitting trousers or slacks.

Prior to Your Test

Upon arrival, you will be greeted by a cardiovascular technician. At this time, you will be asked to complete a medical history sheet and a consent form. The technician will cleanse multiple areas on your chest and apply adhesive patches (electrodes) to those areas. These electrodes are connected by wires to the EKG monitor. This will allow the technician to perform 12-lead electrocardiograms (EKG's) while you exercise. A blood-pressure cuff will be placed on your arm. Your blood pressure and EKG will be monitored before, during, and after your test.

During Your Test

You will be asked to exercise on a treadmill or a bicycle according to your physician's instructions. The length of time you will need to exercise depends upon your physical condition, and varies amongst individuals.

If you experience shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, or extreme fatigue during the test, tell the physician or the technician immediately.

Following Your Test

Upon completion of the test, the technician will remove the blood-pressure cuff and electrodes. At this time you may dress and depart.

Obtaining Your Test Results

The test results will be sent to your physician. Please contact him/her for the results and their significance.