

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Stress Test**
- **Tips**
- **Chicken Salad**
- **Added Sugar**

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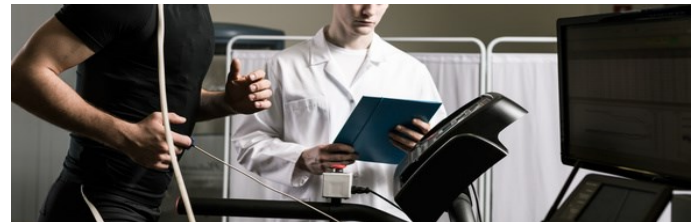
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## What is a Stress Test?

**What is a Stress Test?** A stress test is a common way to check out the heart while exercising. Exercise can bring out changes in the heart that may not be present at rest. A stress test can help determine multiple things such as how well a person's heart is functioning with exercise, if there is decreased blood flow to the heart from blockage, if there are abnormal heart rhythms with exercise, and also if certain therapies are working.

**So what happens during a stress test?**

It depends on what type of stress test is given. If possible, a treadmill stress test is ordered. For this test, your heart, blood pressure, and oxygen is monitored while walking on a treadmill. The treadmill speed and incline gradually increases over the course of minutes until the desired heart rate is achieved.



Some stress tests are done with pictures of the heart before and after. For these pictures, a "tracer" is injected into the bloodstream. This allows the blood flow into the heart to be seen when the pictures are taken. Then the pictures before and after exercise are compared. If there is decreased blood flow to a certain area of the heart with exercise, that could mean there is a blocked artery. These pictures can also show a scar in the heart which could represent an old heart attack. The heart's function or

Ejection fraction can also be determined in many cases from these pictures. Sometimes instead of nuclear pictures, an ultrasound of heart (echocardiogram) may be done to help assess the heart's function before and after exercise. If there is a valve problem, this may also be ordered to assess the valve with exercise.

**What happens if I cannot exercise?**

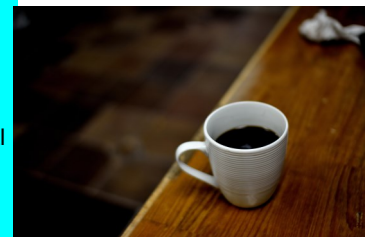
For various reasons including not being able to walk on a treadmill, a chemical stress test may be ordered. Various chemicals or medicines may be used in this situation. (1,6).

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## Tip of the Month

**Preparing for a Stress Test:**

1. Make sure your healthcare provider has an accurate list of medications and ask if you need to hold any before the test.
2. Wear comfortable tennis shoes and loose clothes if you will be doing an exercise test.
3. Ask about caffeine, many times it needs to be avoided if a chemical stress test will be done.
4. Know if you should eat or drink before the test and if not, then how many hours before you should stop.
5. Tell your healthcare provider about any problems you may have had with prior stress test.



# Chicken Salad



Recipe from  
"Breaking the Salt  
Habit" by Erik  
Williams. (5).

## Ingredients:

- 3 Cups Boneless, Skinless, Chicken Breast
- 5 Tbsp. Light Mayonnaise
- 5 Tbsp. Light Sour Cream
- 2 Tbsp. Celery, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. Cucumber
- 2 Tbsp. Green Onion, finely chopped
- 1\2 tsp. Garlic Powder
- 1\4 tsp. Basil

## Directions:

1. Boil chicken in sauce pan until done.
2. Dice or shred chicken.
3. Combine with all other ingredients in a small bowl and mix well.

## Nutrition Info

Yields 6 servings  
1 Serving = 1\2 cup

Calories: 172  
Total Fat: 5g  
Sat Fat: 7g  
Cholesterol: 70mg  
Potassium: 306mg  
Carbohydrates: 2g  
Protein: 27g  
Fiber: <1g  
Sugar: <1g  
Sodium: 136mg

**Quote of the Month:** "We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action." Dr. Henry Link

## Did you Know?



Did you know that eating too much sugar increases your risk of heart disease? Like sodium, sugar can be hidden and deceiving sometimes. Some common offenders are soft drinks, sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade, sweetened coffee drinks, and sweetened dairy products. The obvious offenders are sugar, candy, and desserts. So how much is too much? The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons or 100 calories a day for women and 9 teaspoons or 150 calories a day for men. According to the data, many Americans eat around 22 teaspoons of added sugar a day. Most food labels report sugar in grams. So to put this together, 1 teaspoon of sugar is equal to 4 grams of sugar. So women need to stay under 24 grams and men under 36 grams per day.

So let's break it down. One 8oz. can of coke has 39g of sugar. Remember this is artificial or added sugar that is not naturally occurring. This is more than the daily recommended allowance for men and women. If you get a short vanilla latte from Starbucks with nonfat milk, there is still 17g of sugar present in that drink. Just remember, as the size goes up so does the sugar. The Caramel Apple Spice drink at Starbucks has 83g of sugar if the large or venti size is chosen. So when a drink or food is being chosen, make sure and read the label not only for sodium and fat content but for sugar content as well. This will surprise you. When you are reading the label, watch out for these ingredients because they represent added sugar: corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, sugar, sucrose, brown sugar, nectars, lactose, maltose, molasses, and dextrose just to name a few. (2,3,4).



These commonly used agents such as adenosine or adenosine-like agent, and dipyridamole are used to dilate the hearts vessels and increase blood flow. After the pictures are taken, any differences in blood flow can be seen. Side effects may include flushing, shortness of breath, chest pain and a conduction abnormality in the heart. These side effects are usually short lived and are usually resolved within seconds to minutes after the test. Reversal agents including caffeine may be given after the test to help with side effects if needed. Sometimes dobutamine may have to be used due to underlying lung disease. Dobutamine may also be used to help assess a valve problem. It acts a little bit differently than the other two agents. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure, and blood flow to the heart. Side effects may include abnormal heart rhythms, palpitations, chest pain, and low blood pressure. Again a medicine can be given after the test to help offset these side effects if they occur.

#### **What happens if the Stress Test is abnormal?**

It depends why the stress test was being done. The most common reason is to look for blockage in the arteries of the heart. If it shows that a blockage may be present then a cardiac catheterization may be needed. During this procedure a catheter is placed in an artery in the wrist or groin and is advanced to the heart. A contrast or dye is given to see the arteries. At this time, the amount of blockage and what artery it is in can be seen. Then treatment is recommended which may include a stent, bypass surgery, or medicine. If a stress test was done to see if heart rates increase with exercise and they do not increase appropriately, then a pacemaker may be indicated. If an abnormal heart rhythm was detected during the test, then further treatment may be needed for that rhythm problem. Again, a stress test is done for several reasons and can give a lot of different information about the heart that is helpful in treating it. (1,6).