



Patient & Family Guide  
2022

# Dobutamine<sup>®</sup> Stress Echocardiogram



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Dobutamine® Stress Echocardiogram

## What is a Dobutamine® stress echocardiogram (DSE)?

- Your coronary arteries supply blood to your heart. A DSE is a test to find out if there are any blockages in these arteries and, if so, how severe (very bad) the blockages are.
- This test may be done when the usual tests for this problem cannot be done, or have not given clear results.

## Who will do the test?

The test will be done by a cardiologist (heart doctor) and a cardiac sonographer (heart ultrasound specialist). The cardiologist will talk about the test with you, including possible side effects.

## How do I get ready for the test?

- There is no preparation for this test.
- Please bring a list of all of your current medications.

- You may want to arrange for a drive home before your test. You can drive yourself home but you may feel tired after the test.

### **If you are an outpatient:**

- Go to the Halifax Infirmary, Robie Street entrance. Report to the registration kiosk on Level 4.
- Then, go to the Minor Procedures Clinic on Level 4 to get ready for your test.

### **What will happen during the test?**

- You will be asked to lie on your side.
- Small stickers (electrodes) will be placed on your chest, arms, and legs. The electrodes will then be attached to an echocardiogram machine and an ultrasound machine.
- An intravenous (IV) will be inserted (put in) in your hand or arm. The medication Dobutamine® will be given through the IV. This medication has been given to people with heart problems for many years.
- Your blood pressure and heart rate will be checked every 3 minutes.
- There will always be a doctor present during the test.

- A small device called an ultrasound probe will be moved over your chest. This will give images of your heart.
- Dobutamine® can cause:
  - › Chest pain
  - › Feeling that your heart is pounding fast
  - › Headache
  - › Nausea (upset stomach)
  - › Anxiety
  - › Shakiness
- Your blood pressure may drop a bit or you may have an irregular heart rhythm. **These problems will stop as soon as the Dobutamine® is stopped.**
- There are no long-term effects from this medication.
- The cardiologist and cardiac sonographer will monitor the effect of the Dobutamine® on your heart using the electrocardiogram machine.
- You may be given a medication (called a contrast) by IV to help make the ultrasound more clear.
- You may be given a medication called atropine by IV to raise your heart rate during the test. This medication may make your mouth feel dry.

## **Will I have any discomfort?**

- The test is not painful.
- The IV needle may cause temporary discomfort when it is inserted. There may be a bruise where the needle enters the skin.

## **How long will the test take?**

The test will take about 1½ to 2 hours.

## **After the test**

- You will be taken back to the Minor Procedures Clinic recovery area. You will be monitored there for about 1 hour.

You may still feel tired after the recovery time. You are allowed to drive yourself home but you may want to arrange for someone to pick you up.



### **Looking for more health information?**

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.