The echocardiogram (echo) ultrasound tests are studies based on the principle of sonar. Ultrasound waves sent into the body are returned through a microphone-shaped device known as a transducer. Images are recorded digitally. The Dobutamine Echocardiogram stress test is a relatively painless procedure used to view the wall motion of the heart muscle. Because you are not a candidate for the treadmill stress test, your physician has ordered the Dobutamine Echocardiogram stress test. The images acquired in this test can determine whether the heart muscle is receiving enough blood. As your heart is exercised by the medication, the test will also monitor your heart rhythm, pulse rate and blood pressure.

REGISTER AT THE APPLETON HEART INSTITUTE (FIRST FLOOR)

1818 N. Meade Street
Appleton, Wisconsin  54911
Phone (920) 731-8900 or (800) 236-8988

WHAT DOES IT SHOW?

An echo study provides an image of the moving heart and allows examination of the movement of blood through the heart. It allows the cardiologist to assess your heart for cardiac abnormalities. The Dobutamine Echocardiogram stress test is especially useful in diagnosing coronary artery disease — the presence of blockages in the coronary arteries (the vessels that supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart. Multiple sets of images are taken: one at rest and others during the medication infusion. These images help doctors differentiate between areas that temporarily do not receive enough blood, as well as areas that are permanently damaged from a heart attack.

PREPARATION

- Bring a pair of loose-fitting shorts or slacks.
- Do not eat or drink anything except water for two hours before the test.
  However, IF YOU ARE DIABETIC, please eat your normal meals avoiding caffeine.
- Do not have any caffeine (such as coffee, tea or cola) for 24 hours before the test.
- Take all of your medications as you normally would unless instructed differently by your provider.
- Bring a list of your medications, including dosages and times taken.
PROCEDURE

Preparation will include ten small electrode patches positioned on your chest to monitor your heart rhythm. An I.V. will be started in your arm. A blood pressure cuff will be on the other arm. If you have not had an echocardiogram within the last 6 months it will be done now followed by the resting stress images. The Sonographer will then place a small ultrasound probe with gel on your chest to obtain the resting images of your heart.

Following the resting images, you will be given Dobutamine through your I.V. to increase your heart rate, similar to what vigorous exercise would do. Your blood pressure and ECG will be closely monitored. If you experience any unusual symptoms, please let the staff know.

During the medication infusion, stress images will be obtained. Upon completion of these images, the test will be complete.

Periodically when obtaining images, the quality can be improved by the use of an imaging contrast agent. This will be determined during your resting scan and will be administered through your existing IV. If you are pregnant, please inform the sonographer.

INTERPRETATION

The complete study interpretation will usually take several days. A cardiologist who is specially trained in diagnostic procedures will interpret your scan. Your physician will receive the results and explain them to you.

SAFETY

The test is generally safe. However, if you are pregnant, suspect you might be pregnant or are a nursing mother, discuss the matter with your doctor. A small amount of risk does exist because the test stresses the heart. Possible rare complications include severe shortness of breath, abnormal heart rhythms and heart attack. Experienced personnel are available to handle emergency situations.

YOUR PROCEDURE IS SCHEDULED FOR:

Date:   ____/____/____  
Arrival Time:  _____________  
Procedure Time:  _____________  

Revised August 2011