

Understanding heart tests

Video	Audio
	There are many different types of heart tests doctors may order for their patients.
	Mayo Clinic cardiologist Dr. Christopher DeSimone knows it can be confusing and unsettling for some patients.
00:13:33	"I don't want patients to be worried or stressed out."
Fullpage CG "Cardiac Stress Test"	He finds one of the best ways to put patients at ease is to explain the tests in plain language — starting with a cardiac stress test, which isn't as stressful as it sounds.
00:03:23 – 00:03:37 (on camera) Christopher DeSimone, M.D. Cardiovascular Disease Mayo Clinic	"It's not a scary test. It's not putting you mentally under stress. It's physically putting you under stress. I don't want any patient to be scared or worried about a stress test. It's not going to be harmful. It's not going to be painful at all."
00:02:39 – 00:02:46	"A cardiac stress test is just that. We're trying to see what happens when we put your heart under stress."
00:03:03 – 00:03:22	"We could do that with making you exercise. We could do that with giving you drugs that make you pretend like you're exercising, even though you're sitting down. We also give you medicines that kind of give you these radiotracers that tick up into the heart and change when you're at rest, compared to when you're being stressed either with exercise or these drugs we give you."
00:04:31 – 00:04:48	"It's to see if there's something that we do to the heart that makes it overload or work harder. Is the heart able to keep up, and if it's not able to keep up, why? The main reason is you're not able to get enough blood flow, and nutrition and oxygen, to the heart itself — meaning there may be blockages or something wrong with the blood arteries that are supplying the blood flow to the heart."
00:04:54 – 00:05:02	
Fullpage CG "Electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)"	Another common heart test is an electrocardiogram, which is often called an ECG or EKG.
00:05:24 – 00:05:59	"It's a 10-second snapshot of the electricity of what your heart's doing — top of the heart and bottom of the heart — in a 10-second period of

	<p>time. You will lay down — again, no pain at all. They'll put several sticky patches across the chest wall. It's like giving the physician 12 cameras because there's a 12-lead EKG — 12-camera picture — about what the electrical activity of the hearts doing. It's also giving us a look at how healthy the atrium and the muscle — the top and the bottom chambers respectively of the heart — looks. It's a very helpful test — very noninvasive, very quick procedure."</p>
<p>Fullpage CG: "Echocardiogram"</p>	<p>An echocardiogram is used to give doctors a better look at a patient's heart in real time.</p>
<p>00:11:32 – 00:11:34</p>	<p>"It's an ultrasound for the heart."</p>
<p>00:11:11 – 00:11:30</p>	<p>"They're doing a very comprehensive look at how the blood is flowing in the heart noninvasively. Nothing's going inside of your heart. So a painless procedure and nothing to worry about. But that gives us a lot of information about how healthy your heart is, what it's doing at rest, what the valves are doing, and what type of pressures we're seeing in the heart."</p>
<p>00:13:18 – 00:13:31</p>	<p>"We're trying to diagnose what's going on with your heart electrically and structurally, and what we could do to make you feel better, or in certain cases, prolong your life, or in all cases, improve your quality of life."</p>
	<p>For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.</p>