

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE

What to expect during a stress test

A “stress test” may sound scary. But it’s actually a low-risk test that involves exercising on a treadmill or stationary bike while monitoring your heart activity.

A stress test can provide lots of valuable information to your care team. It can help monitor the progression of your heart disease, determine if treatments are working, and evaluate your risk of a heart attack. Stress tests are also used to determine eligibility for surgery or whether it’s safe to start an exercise program.

During a stress test, you’ll want to wear clothes



and shoes that you can comfortably walk, jog, or bike in. You’ll start exercising on a treadmill or stationary bike at a low level. A technician will gradually increase the intensity depending on your blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and oxygen levels.

As you are exercising, your heart’s activity will be recorded with an electrocardiogram and sometimes an

echocardiogram. In another type of stress test, called a nuclear stress test, you’ll be injected with a traceable substance that lets the technician see how your blood flows through your blood vessels.

If you’re not able to exercise, your doctor may recommend a chemical, or pharmacological, stress test. In this case, you’ll be given a medicine that raises your heart rate, without having to exercise.



5 things you didn't know about cholesterol

There are lots of misperceptions about cholesterol. These facts can help you better understand what cholesterol is and keep your heart health in check.

1. Not all cholesterol is bad for you.

There are two types of cholesterol. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is bad. It can build up in artery walls, leading to coronary artery disease. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is good. It helps remove LDLs from the bloodstream.

2. It's OK to eat eggs.

It is true that eggs are high in cholesterol. But saturated

fats and trans fats are more likely to raise your LDL cholesterol. (Eggs are not high in saturated fat.)

3. Exercise is important too.

Food choices can help lower LDL cholesterol. But regular exercise can help raise your HDL. Aim to get 150 minutes of moderate-

intensity exercise a week, such as brisk walking, riding a bike, or swimming.

4. There are other ways to improve cholesterol besides diet and exercise.

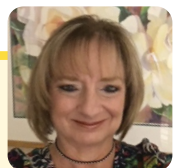
Beyond diet and exercise, your weight, age, and family medical history can influence your cholesterol. Your doctor may recommend a medication called a statin to help lower your LDL cholesterol.

5. You need a cholesterol check starting at age 20.

The American Heart Association recommends that you start getting your cholesterol tested at age 20. High cholesterol typically has no symptoms. Early testing helps spot problems when they are often easier to treat.

Care Advocate Spotlight

Diana Hall has been with AvMed for 17 years, 15 years as a Member Engagement Representative, and 2 years as a Care Advocate.



"My favorite thing about being a Care Advocate is helping members with their health care needs and making a difference in their lives."

To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735



Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.



Healthy holiday swaps

While “special occasion” treats can certainly be part of a healthy diet, the holiday season ushers in a lot of “special occasions” that can make it harder to stick to a healthy eating plan at this time of year. But these small changes can help.

Swap in non-starchy vegetables.

They're lower in carbs and higher in fiber. For example, try mixing mashed potatoes with cauliflower. Other non-

starchy vegetables include mushrooms, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, leafy greens, and eggplant.

Go for brothy soups instead of creamy soups.

They're less calorie dense, but just as comforting. Examples: chicken noodle, french onion, ramen, minestrone and more.

Keep sides simple.

Instead of rich, creamy casseroles, opt for simple roasted vegetables made with olive oil and herbs.

Choose lighter dips.

Hummus, guacamole and salsa have less saturated fat than creamy dips.

Use oils instead of butter and cream.

Oils are lower in saturated fat and provide heart-healthy unsaturated fats.

Use lower-fat dairy.

For example, use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream. It has more protein and less saturated fat.

Choose snacks wisely.

Instead of chips and cheese, go for low-calorie options like raw veggies, popcorn, and fresh fruit.

Cut the sugar in half.

You can almost always get away with less sugar in dessert recipes. Add extra spices for more flavor.

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Recipe



Dark Chocolate Bark with Hazelnuts and Cranberries

Serves 12 | Prep time: 15 minutes

This dessert looks impressive, but it's also a breeze to make. Experiment with different nuts and dried fruits.

Ingredients

12 ounces dark chocolate,
finely chopped
¼ cup chopped hazelnuts
¼ cup dried cranberries

Directions

1. Line a rimmed baking dish with parchment paper.
2. Bring 1 inch of water to a simmer in a saucepan, then reduce heat to low. Place a heatproof bowl on top of the saucepan that fits snugly but doesn't

touch the water. Add the chocolate to the bowl and stir until just melted.

3. Pour the melted chocolate onto the baking sheet, then sprinkle with the hazelnuts and cranberries. Refrigerate for 1 hour, then break into large pieces.

Nutrition Info

Calories 190 | Fat 12g (Sat Fat 6g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 0mg | Carbs 18g | Fiber 3g | Sugar 13g (inc. 11g Added Sugar) | Protein 2g Vit D 0µg | Calcium 20mg | Iron 2mg | Potassium 179mg