

## **DOBUTAMINE STRESS ECHOCARDIOGRAM (DSE) INFORMATION SHEET**

### **What is a Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram and why do I need one?**

The Dobutamine Stress Echo (DSE) is a valuable non invasive diagnostic procedure that allows the cardiologist to assess certain heart conditions such as coronary artery disease, myocardial disease and valvular problems. The test involves performing an Echocardiogram (heart scan) and giving a drug into a vein (dobutamine) that mimics the effects of exercise on the heart. In order to diagnose some of the heart conditions mentioned above, is required that the heart be evaluated while it is working its hardest. The dobutamine stress echo was developed principally but not exclusively for people who are unable to exercise on a treadmill to the required exercise level.

### **At the time of the test**

The specialist cardiac physiologist or doctor will explain the procedure to you and will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have. A cannula (small plastic tube) will be placed in a vein in your arm. Before the dobutamine is administered you will have an echocardiogram. After the echocardiogram, the dobutamine will be given by continuous infusion (drip) through your vein. This will slowly increase your heart rate in a controlled way. The rate of the dobutamine infusion will be increased every three minutes until you have reached your target heart rate which is determined by your age. Your blood pressure and heart rate will be carefully monitored throughout the test. It is sometimes necessary to give an additional drug called **Atropine** to help you reach your target heart rate. Once you have attained your target heart rate a further scan will be performed. Following this the infusion of dobutamine will be stopped. Once the procedure has been completed you will continue to be monitored until your heart rate returns to normal.

## To prepare for this test, you must:

- Not eat for 2 hours prior to the test
- Bring a list of your medications
- If you are on any of the following medications **they should be stopped 48 hours before the appointment time**. This is because all these medications slow the heart.

**Beta blocker** e.g. Atenolol, Metoprolol, Bisoprolol, Carvedilol.

**Verapamil** e.g. Securon, Cordilox.

**Diltiazem** e.g. Tildiem, Adizem, Angitil, Slozem.

**You may take your regular medications, with exception of those mentioned above.**

## Is the Dobutamine Stress Echocardiogram a safe test?

Dobutamine stress echocardiogram is a safe test. However, a small number of patients may experience minor side-effects.

**Common side-effects:** It is not unusual to feel slightly sick or dizzy as a result of the stress medicine. This will settle down very quickly once the medicine has been stopped. You may also develop some chest pain or tightness during the test.

**Rare side effects (less than 1 in 1000):** the stress medicine may make the heart develop an abnormal rhythm. If this occurs, it will often settle down by simply stopping the stress medicine, but occasionally you may need additional treatment for this. There is a very small risk (less than 1 in 2000) of a heart attack occurring during the test.

**Extremely rare side-effects:** There is an extremely small risk (less than 1 in 10,000) of an allergic reaction to one of the medicines used. **If you have had an allergic reaction to any medicine in the past please inform the doctor.** There is also an extremely small risk of developing a bad angina or small heart attack during the test.

At 66 Harley Street Investigations we take every precaution with respect to full and complete training of attending technical staff (usually the echocardiographer and a cardiologist).

The 66 Harley Street lab team will be happy to help with any concerns on the following number **020 7436 4568**.