

POLICY ON EXERCISE TOLERANCE TESTING
FOR
RETURN PATIENTS TO THE DFC

Exercise tolerance testing may be helpful to identify individuals at increased risk for adverse events during exercise. The following individuals will be required to have an Exercise Tolerance Test ("ETT," commonly known as a "treadmill test" although it can also be performed on a bicycle, or using other modifications) as a condition for participation in the exercise program of the Duke Diet and Fitness Center.

For patients with uninterpretable EKG tracings that preclude adequate ETT testing, nuclear perfusion or stress echocardiography may be required.

Updated ETT testing **within the past 12 months** will be required:

- a. for any Return client whose last exercise tolerance testing was abnormal or "positive" (i.e. the test suggested "ischemia" or compromised circulation to the heart)
- b. for any Return client with known or suspected coronary artery disease based on medical history, symptoms (such as chest pain), physical exam or EKG findings

Updated ETT testing **within the past 12 to 24 months** will be required:

- c. for any Return client with diabetes
- d. for any Return client if they are a man older than age 45, or a woman older than age 55 **AND** have **1 or more** of the following risk factors for heart disease:
 - Regular tobacco use within the past year (daily use of cigarettes, cigars, pipe, or chewing tobacco)
 - Elevated blood pressure (BP > 140 systolic, or > 90 diastolic **OR** on medication for high blood pressure)
 - Abnormal cholesterol (total cholesterol > 240, or LDL cholesterol > 160) **OR** on medications for high cholesterol
 - A history within their immediate family of early heart disease (father or a brother who has had a heart attack or sudden cardiac death before age 55, or mother or a sister who has had this before age 65)

NOTE: Clients who appear to meet the risk criteria listed above, may wish to obtain an ETT on the order of their personal physician, PRIOR TO attending the DFC. Clients MUST bring their complete, interpreted test results with them so that the DFC medical staff may review these at the initial medical assessment. Alternatively, test results may be faxed to the attention of DFC Medical Clinic, at 919-688-8022. The patient's physician should address any abnormal or indeterminate test results, with further evaluation as appropriate.

Obtaining the test at home and bringing the report will minimize delays in beginning exercise at the DFC. Such testing is usually covered by health insurance.

If clients need an ETT and do not bring test results with them, testing can be arranged through the DFC, **for an additional \$400**. This test will usually be obtained on the Monday beginning the first week on the DFC program, but depending on test results, initiation of an exercise program may be delayed. This charge will be the patient's responsibility. The DFC cannot file for insurance reimbursement for the ETT.

If patients undergo an ETT through the DFC, and it is abnormal or indeterminate, then a cardiology consultation will be required to establish exercise clearance. Also, if individuals bring with them from home a report documenting an abnormal or indeterminate ETT, without adequate follow-up by their personal physician, a cardiology consultation may be required. This can usually be arranged during an individual's first week on the DFC program, though starting exercise may be delayed. The cost of the cardiology consultation and any further cardiac testing which may be recommended is **NOT INCLUDED** in the DFC program fee, and is the responsibility of the individual. Insurance may cover the cost of the cardiology consultation. Individuals should have all insurance information with them, and may address insurance coverage issues with the cardiologist's office.

Note that these are **guidelines**. There may be other circumstances in which the DFC medical staff may judge it appropriate to require exercise tolerance testing or cardiology consultation before allowing exercise participation. The DFC medical staff has final authority in decisions regarding exercise clearance.