



POLICY ON EXERCISE TOLERANCE TESTING FOR DFC PATIENTS

Exercise tolerance testing may be helpful to identify individuals at increased risk for adverse events during exercise training. 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 modalities) 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.

1. Those new or return clients with known or suspected heart disease based on medical history, symptoms (such as chest pain), physical exam, or EKG findings, will be required to present a complete report of a RECENT ETT (generally, within the past 12 months, but more recently if appropriate, based on the medical history).
2. Other **NEW** clients will be required to have an ETT within 12 months prior to admission, if they meet **EITHER criterion "a" or criterion "b" below**:
Other **RETURN** clients will be required to have an ETT within 24 months prior to admission, if they meet **EITHER criterion "a" or criterion "b" below**:
 - a) They have diabetes, **OR**
 - b) 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 > 200, 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 that these are **guidelines**. There may be other circumstances in which the DFC medical staff may judge it appropriate to require exercise tolerance testing before allowing exercise participation (for instance, a patient who does not quite meet the age criteria above, but has an unusual number or severity of heart disease risk factors may be required to undergo testing). The DFC medical staff has final authority in exercise clearance decisions.

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. If this is done 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. This test will be performed at a Duke Cardiology office and is usually 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. Please bring your health insurance card, since the cardiology office will file for insurance reimbursement. However, any balance due will be the patient’s responsibility.

If patients undergo an ETT through the DFC, and it is abnormal or indeterminate, then a cardiology consultation may 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.

(ETT Policy New Clients 09/11)