

Understanding heart tests

By DEEDEE STIEPAN

Mayo Clinic News Network

Having a healthy heart is always the goal, but sometimes you need some help to make sure everything is working just right. And that's where heart tests come in.

Health care providers can order many types of heart tests for their patients, and it can get confusing and sometimes scary. Dr. Christopher DeSimone, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, hopes to put patients at ease by explaining what each test is and does.

tions that are taken up by the heart so that we can get an image of the heart function at rest and with stress. These are safe and rapidly leave your system. There is no pain whatsoever.”

The reason cardiac stress tests are performed is to see if the heart can keep up when put under stress. If not, usually the main reason is the patient cannot get enough blood flow and oxygen to the heart itself. This may suggest blockages in the arteries that feed the heart blood and oxygen.

EKG

“It's (an EKG) a 10-second snapshot of the electricity of what your heart's doing — top of the heart and bottom of the heart. During the test, 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 are 12 patches used for an EKG. This also gives us a look into how healthy the muscle is in the atrium and ventricles, the top and bottom chambers of the heart. It's a very helpful test, noninvasive and a very quick procedure,” says Dr. DeSimone.

Echocardiogram

An echocardiogram is essentially an ultra-



Dreamstime-TNS

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sound for the heart, and it's used to give health care providers a better look at a patient's heart in real-time.

“It provides a very comprehensive look at how the blood is flowing in the heart, noninvasively. Nothing's going

inside of your heart. So, again, it's a painless procedure. Nothing to worry about. But that gives us a lot of information about how healthy your heart is, the size and shape of the heart, how all of the walls of the heart are moving, how the blood is flowing

across valves in the heart as blood travels from chamber to chamber and to the rest of the body.”

Dr. DeSimone hopes to take some of the fear out of heart tests so more people will be proactive about their heart health. “We're trying to diag-

nose what's going on with your heart electrically, structurally, and what we could do to make you feel better — or in certain cases prolong your life. We're always trying to improve your quality of life,” says Dr. DeSimone.

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TUESDAYS
• Enterprise Group
12 - 1:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.
• Enterprise Group
7 - 8:00 pm
(Big Bk Study)
113.5 E Main St.

WEDNESDAYS
• Enterprise Group
7:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.

THURSDAYS
• Enterprise Group
12 - 1:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.
• All Saints (Mens Mtg)
7:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.
• Grapevine Meeting
301 S. Lake; 5:30 pm

FRIDAYS
• Enterprise Group
7:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.

SATURDAYS
• Enterprise Group
7:00 pm
113.5 E Main St.

City of Joseph

MONDAYS
• Grace and Dignity (Womans Mtg)
Joseph United Methodist Church; 6:00 pm
301 S. Lake St,
Corner 3rd & Lake/Side Stairs, Lake St

WEDNESDAYS
• Grace and Dignity (Womans Mtg) 12 pm
301 S. Lake St.,
Church Basement

City of Wallowa

SUNDAYS
• Church of Christ
504 w. 2nd St.; 5:00 pm

SATURDAYS
• Church of Christ
504 w. 2nd St.; 12:00 pm

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