

PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS

Explicit instructions for participants before exercise testing increase test validity and data accuracy. Whenever possible, written instructions along with a description of the evaluation should be provided well in advance of the appointment so the client or patient can prepare adequately. The following points should be considered for inclusion in such preliminary instructions; however, specific instructions vary with test type and purpose.

- Participants should refrain from ingesting food, alcohol, or caffeine or using tobacco products within 3 hours of testing.
- Participants should be rested for the assessment, avoiding significant exertion or exercise on the day of the assessment.
- Clothing should permit freedom of movement and include walking or running shoes. Women should bring a loose-fitting, short-sleeved blouse that buttons down the front and should avoid restrictive undergarments.
- If the evaluation is on an outpatient basis, participants should be made aware that the evaluation may be fatiguing and that they may wish to have someone accompany them to the assessment to drive home afterward.
- If the test is for diagnostic purposes, it may be helpful for patients to discontinue prescribed cardiovascular medications, but only with physician approval. Currently prescribed antianginal agents alter the hemodynamic response to exercise and significantly reduce the sensitivity of ECG changes for ischemia. Patients taking intermediate or high-dose β -blocking agents may be asked to taper their medication over a two-to-four-day period to minimize hyperadrenergic withdrawal responses.
- If the test is for functional or exercise prescription purposes, *patients should continue their medication regimen* on their usual schedule so that the exercise responses will be consistent with responses expected during exercise training.
- Participants should bring a list of their medications, including dosage and frequency of administration, to the assessment and should report the last actual dose taken. As an alternative, participants may wish to bring their medications with them for the exercise testing staff to record.
- Drink ample fluids over the 24-hour period preceding the test to ensure normal hydration before testing.

American College of Sports Medicine. *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription*, 8th ed. Baltimore: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2010. 57-58.