

## Specialty Examination – CARDIOLOGY

In instances when a Specialty Examination is requested, the Contractor shall provide the DDDS and its DDDS claimants with the following, in addition to, the Adult Physical Disability Evaluation and Report Guidelines.

The examination should concentrate on the areas affected by the DDDS claimant's illness or impairment. Provide specific information and be as descriptive as possible.

### (1) Cardiovascular Examination.

- (a) Review of Cardiovascular System. Describe specific complaints as follows and discuss:
  - i. Onset
  - ii. Character, location, and frequency
  - iii. Precipitating factors which incite and mode of relief.
- (b) Chronic Heart Failure. Describe:
  - i. Current symptoms
  - ii. Dyspnea
  - iii. Orthopnea
  - iv. Fatigue
- (c) Ischemic Heart Disease. Describe:
  - i. Current symptoms
  - ii. Chest pain (angina, angina equivalents, or variant angina)
  - iii. Reduced cerebral perfusion (i.e. confusion, difficulty walking)
  - iv. Quality, location, radiation, and duration of pain along with factors that exacerbate the pain (i.e. continued activity), or relieve it (i.e. rest, nitroglycerin, food, etc.)
  - v. Concomitant symptoms (i.e. SOB, diaphoresis, nausea, dizziness, or lightheadedness)
- (d) Arrhythmias. Describe:
  - i. Current symptoms
  - ii. Description of dizziness, near syncope, and syncope
- (e) Peripheral Vascular Disease. Describe:
  - i. Current symptoms
  - ii. Intermittent claudication, swelling and skin changes in the lower extremities
- (f) Vital signs.
  - i. Pulse rate and rhythm
  - ii. Respiratory rate, and
    - (A) Whether labored or unlabored
    - (B) If there is use of accessory muscles of respiration
- (g) Lungs. Describe and discuss:
  - i. Occurrence of cough, labored breathing, audible wheezing, pallor cyanosis, hoarseness, clubbing of fingers, chest wall deformity, curvature of the spine, etc.
  - ii. Whether there is prolongation of the exhalatory phase of respiration
  - iii. Breath sounds (that is, air exchange), and presence or absence of adventitious sounds (i.e. rhonchi or rales)
  - iv. Diaphragmatic motion
- (h) Heart and Vascular. Describe and discuss:
  - i. Heart size
  - ii. Presence of any lifts, heaves, or thrills
  - iii. Point of maximal impact of cardiac apex
  - iv. Presence of any murmurs, rubs, or gallops
  - v. Presence and location of any bruits
  - vi. Distention of neck veins

- vii. Presence, type, and extent of any peripheral edema and any associated skin discoloration or ulceration in the extremities
- viii. Quality of peripheral pulses in extremities
- ix. Presence and quality of carotid pulses
- x. Presence of any abdominal pulsation and/or bruit
- (i) Additional Information – Electrocardiogram (ECG) and Exercise Tolerance Tests (ETT)
  - i. ECG tracings must be provided when these tests have been performed
  - ii. Reported findings for electrocardiograms must meet the requirements of Section 4.00C of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/4.00-Cardiovascular-Adult.htm>)
  - iii. On rare occasions, exercise tolerance test (ETT) may be necessary. *Physician supervising the ETT will make the final decision as to whether the DDDS claimant's medical condition will allow him/her to tolerate the stress involved.*
- (j) Medical Opinion. The summary should also note the DDDS claimant's cardiovascular symptoms and signs with an evaluation of whether or not the findings are consistent with the presence of cardiovascular disease.