

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 General Medical 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) Current Medical History. Describe and discuss the DDDS claimant's:
 - i. Dyspnea, orthopnea, fatigue, and exercise intolerance
 - ii. Chest pain (angina, angina equivalents, or variant angina) and reduced cerebral perfusion (for example, confusion, difficulty walking)
 - iii. The quality, location, radiation, and duration of the chest pain
 - (A) Factors that exacerbate the chest pain (for example, continued activity, deep breathing, etc.)
 - (B) Factors that relieve the chest pain (for example, rest, nitroglycerin, food, etc.)
 - iv. Any associated symptoms such as shortness of breath, diaphoresis, nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, near syncope, or syncope
 - v. Intermittent claudication, swelling, and skin changes in the lower extremities
 - vi. Dates and results of relevant diagnostic procedures, such as electrocardiography, exercise-tolerance stress testing, angiography, echocardiography, Doppler tests, and any other imaging studies
- (b) Lungs. Describe and discuss:
 - i. Whether respiratory rate is labored or unlabored and diaphragmatic motion
 - ii. Occurrence of cough, audible wheezing, pallor cyanosis, hoarseness, clubbing of fingers, chest wall deformity, any abnormal curvature of the spine
 - iii. Breath sounds (air exchange), whether there is prolongation of the exhalatory phase of respiration, and the presence or absence of adventitious sounds (i.e. rales or rhonchi)
 - iv. Diaphragmatic motion
- (c) Heart and Vascular. Describe and discuss:
 - i. Presence of any lifts, heaves, or thrills
 - ii. Heart size
 - 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
- (d) Additional Information – Electrocardiogram (ECG) and Exercise Tolerance Tests (ETT) only after receiving proper authorization from the DDDS
 - i. ECG: Perform as specified in section 4.00C of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/4.00-Cardiovascular-Adult.htm>) and provide ECG tracings
 - ii. ETT: Perform as specified in section 4.00C of the List of Impairments (see <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/4.00-Cardiovascular-Adult.htm>)
 - iii. Doppler tests: Perform as specified in section 4.00C of the List of Impairments (see

- <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/4.00-Cardiovascular-Adult.htm>)
- iv. 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>)
- v. 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.*
- (e) 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.