

ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

ECHO/ ECHO DOPPLER

An Echocardiogram (Echo) is an ultrasound that uses sound waves to create a moving picture of your heart. Your cardiologist may order an Echo with Doppler (Echo Doppler). The Doppler is done throughout the echo and is used to measure the speed and direction of blood flowing through the heart. These pictures will show your cardiologist:

- The size of the heart chambers.
- The thickness of the heart chamber walls.
- Ejection fraction (pumping function) of the heart.
- Valve function, Valve narrowing, and Valve leakage.
- If there is possible fluid in the pericardium (sac around the heart).
- Evaluate systolic function and diastolic function.
- Possible causes of abnormal heart sounds (murmurs).
- Possible blood clots.
- Tumors or masses in the heart.

During your Echo/ Echo Doppler the sonographer will move a transducer (probe) over your chest to obtain the desired pictures of your heart. A 3 lead EKG will also be taken during the test to aid in measurements.

Echocardiograms are extremely safe. There are no known risks from the use of ultrasound testing. There is no preparation for this procedure.

The Echo/ Echo Doppler can either be performed at the physician's office or at a hospital.

Your cardiologist will discuss with you and decide, based on your current health condition, which test is right for you.

TEE or TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHO

On occasion your cardiologist may order a TEE for you. This procedure gives your physician a much sharper image of your heart because the probe is located closer to the heart and the lungs and bones of the chest do not get in the way of the images. A TEE can provide the following information:

- Detection of blood clots.
- Masses or tumors located in the heart.
- Determine the severity of valve problems.
- Detect infections of the heart valves.
- Detect congenital heart defects.

- Detection of shunts (abnormal blood flow between the chambers of the heart).

During this particular procedure, anesthesia and sedatives will be used to minimize the discomfort. There is usually no pain associated with a TEE. During a TEE the transducer is a very small tube the patient swallows allowing the physician and sonographer to obtain pictures of the heart from the back side. Your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing will be monitored by the professionals throughout the procedure. You will also be given oxygen during the procedure.

You will not be able to drive for 12 hours after the procedure due to the sedation.

How safe is a TEE? TEE is a common procedure and considered fairly safe. On occasion patients may experience a reaction to the sedatives, minor bleeding, breathing problems, abnormal or slow heart rhythm.

The TEE is performed at the hospital. Your cardiologist will decide, based on your current health condition which test is right for you. You will be given detailed instructions for the procedure from your physician or his nurse.

Your cardiologist will discuss with you and decide, based on your current health condition, which test is right for you.