

## **Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) Procedure Pre and Post Instructions**

A standard echo is performed by application of an ultrasound probe to the chest wall over your heart (outside the body). By using ultrasound waves, which are not felt and are harmless, a motion picture is made of your heart as it beats in your chest. This motion picture is recorded on videotape and studied by a cardiologist who makes a report for your physician.

A TEE provides clearer and more detailed pictures than a standard echo because the ultrasound probe is moved inside your food pipe (esophagus). Since your esophagus (the passageway from your mouth to your stomach) passes very close to your heart, placing the ultrasound probe down the esophagus gives a much better and more detailed picture of your heart.

A TEE can tell many important things about your heart including its size, how strongly it pumps blood, and how well the valves are working. It is also very useful for identifying many of the common problems that can occur with the heart. It can also visualize heart structures not seen with surface echocardiogram like the left atrial appendage. This makes it a very useful test for providing information about your heart's overall health, and also presence of any blood clot in the upper chambers of the heart.

Your TEE will be performed by a cardiologist or electrophysiologist who has special expertise in this procedure. Your physician will be assisted by a special ultrasound technician called a sonographer. A nurse will also be present to administer medications, monitor your blood pressure and pulse, and supervise the recovery process.

### ***Preparation***

You will be told when and where to report for your test. In preparation, you will need to:

- Not eat or drink for at least six hours before the test.
- If you're an outpatient, have someone drive you to and from your test.

NOTE: If you wear dentures, patial plates, etc., you'll need to remove them before the test. Be sure to tell your physician if you have problems swallowing or have any conditions involving your esophagus or stomach (such as a hiatal hernia).

You'll be asked to put on a hospital gown and lie down on a bed or table. An intravenous (IV) catheter will be inserted in your hand or arm. This will be used to give you fluid and medications. Your throat will be sprayed with an anesthetic (numbing medication) and you will be given some medication through your IV to help you relax and fall lightly asleep.

### ***Procedure***

You'll be sedated but conscious during this procedure so that you can respond to the physician's instructions. You'll be asked to lie on your left side, and the physician will gently insert a lubricated tube into your mouth and guide it down your throat into place. You will be asked to swallow, as this will help guide the tube. Although you may feel the tube moving, it shouldn't be painful or interfere with your breathing. Occasionally, an assistant may use suctioning to help clear the secretions from your mouth

and throat. Most patients report no discomfort during the procedure, which takes about 20 minutes to complete. You should, however, allow one to two hours from arrival to departure.

### ***Recovery***

After your TEE, your throat may be slightly sore or scratchy. Cold drinks or lozenges will help to relieve these common symptoms; however, you shouldn't eat or drink anything until your throat is no longer numb (usually about 2 to 3 hours). If you were given a sedative during the procedure, you shouldn't drive for at least 12 hours.

A cardiologist will review the TEE videotape and send a report to your physician who will likely contact you to discuss the results. If you have any unusual symptoms, such as pain or bleeding, be sure to call our office immediately.

### ***Health Maintenance***

Regardless of the results of your study and the course of treatment your physician recommends, you play an important role in staying healthy. Be sure to keep all appointments for exams and follow-up tests. Follow your instructions, don't hesitate to talk about your concerns, and immediately report any new symptoms.

As always, if you have any questions about your health, be sure to call our office.

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