

Preparing for your Transthoracic Echocardiogram (TTE)

We are doing a **Transthoracic Echocardiogram (TTE)**, also known as an 'echo', echocardiogram, or a cardiac ultrasound to look at your heart. It is a safe and painless diagnostic procedure that uses high frequency sound waves to take moving pictures of the heart. There are no known harmful effects from this type of ultrasound.

A sonographer (a medical imaging professional) uses a small, hand-held transducer (ultrasound probe) to direct sound waves at the heart. This transducer sends and receives signals that appear on the screen as a moving image of the heart. The images on the screen are in black and white; however, we can add colour to it to show the blood moving in and out of the chambers. We also take many measurements during your test to determine how well your heart is working.

How do I prepare for the TTE?

THIS TEST REQUIRES NO SPECIAL PREPARATION.

- You may eat and perform normal activities (unless instructed otherwise).
- You may continue to take your medicines as your doctor prescribes.

ON THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE:

- Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time.
- Wear comfortable clothes. Leave all jewelry and valuables at home.
- Bring your health card and a photo ID.
- A sonographer will review the procedure with you and can answer any question you may have.

What can I expect during my TTE?

A sonographer will perform the test.

Before we start the test, we will:

- Ask you to disrobe from the waist up and give you a gown to put on.
- Attach 3 electrode stickers to your chest to obtain an ECG signal (electrocardiogram signal or electrical activity from your heart).
- Take your blood pressure.

We will ask you to lie on the examining table on your left side (see Figure A on the following page). You will lie in this position throughout the test.

The sonographer will put some jelly on the ultrasound probe. Then, we will take a series of images and measurements.

You cannot feel the ultrasound and the test does not hurt. If you experience any discomfort during the test, please let your sonographer know.



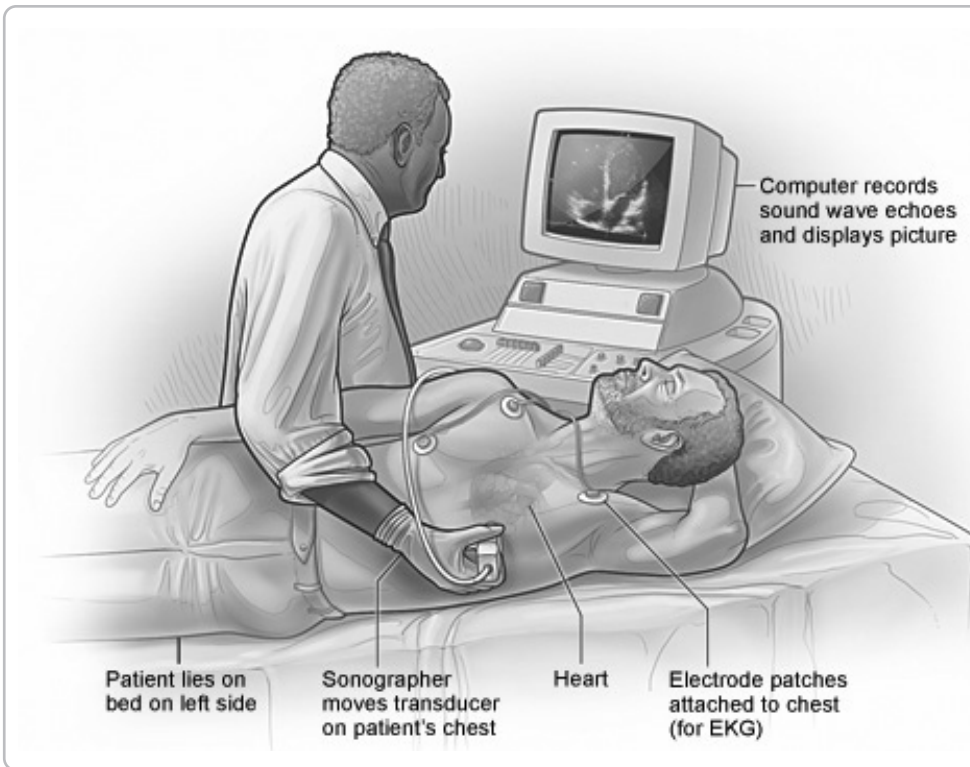


Figure A

The illustration shows a patient having an echocardiogram. The patient lies on his left side. A sonographer moves the transducer on the patient's chest, while viewing the echo pictures on a computer.

Image Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

How long is the TTE?

This test takes approximately 45 minutes to complete.

What can I expect after my TTE?

Although the sonographer performing the test can see what is occurring with your heart, unfortunately, he/she cannot provide any information. We will send the images and measurements to a cardiologist (a heart specialist), who will read and interpret the test. The cardiologist then sends a report to the doctor who requested the test for you. That doctor will provide you with the results of your test.

For more information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this procedure, please speak to your doctor or contact:

Cardiology Clinic, Humber River Health
Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 47000