

Transesophageal Echocardiogram

What Is a Transesophageal Echocardiogram?

- This test allows the cardiologist to view the internal structures of the heart and the heart's major vessels by inserting a probe (a thin flexible tube with a special tip) down the throat.
- The patient is sedated so he will be relaxed and unaware of any discomfort during the procedure.
- An IV line will be started so a sedative can be given by the nurse.
- A monitor will be placed on the patient's finger so that the amount of oxygen in his blood can be monitored continuously throughout the procedure.
- The patient will be positioned on his left side so that the probe can be inserted through the mouth into the esophagus.
- Anesthetic spray is given to the back of the throat. This will numb the throat and tongue and make the probe easier to swallow.
- The patient will be instructed to take several deep breaths to help relax the muscles in the back of the throat so the probe can be swallowed more easily. The patient may gag a little as the probe is inserted but will be unaware of this due to being sedated. Suctioning to decrease the secretions in the mouth and throat may be needed.
- The tip of the probe sends out sound waves (ultrasound) that echo within the chest wall cavity. These echoes are picked up and create a picture of the heart that is displayed on the video monitor.
- This test lasts 60-90 minutes.

Why Is A Transesophageal Echocardiogram Done?

- This test will help the doctor to evaluate the patient's cardiac condition related to the following:
 - if there are any congenital defects, heart valve disease, or heart muscle disease,
 - if an artificial valve is functioning properly,
 - if there are any blood clots within the heart.

What Preparation Is Needed?

- Nothing to eat or drink (except water) for 8 hours before the test.
- Do not smoke for at least 6 hours prior to test.
- It is important for the patient to ask his doctor:
 - how to adjust insulin and food intake if he is diabetic
 - if he should take his regular medications the morning of the test; if yes, take the medications with water 3 hours before the test.
 - if IV antibiotics have been ordered; if yes, the patient reports to the Short Stay department. The antibiotics will be administered by IV and a Cardiology technician will pick up the patient in Short Stay.
- Inform the doctor of allergies to any medications.

What Happens After The Test?

- After the test, the patient will not be allowed to eat for 1-2 hours due to the numbing of the throat.
- The patient may be required to stay for 1 to 2 hours after the test is completed until the effect of the sedation has worn off.
- The patient must have someone drive him home after this test.