

TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY (TEE) (HAVING A)

What is a transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE)?

A transesophageal echocardiogram is a special test that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to examine the heart. A device which makes the sound waves is put into the esophagus (throat) directly behind the heart. This gives a clear view of various structures of the heart that would not be seen as clearly if the device were put on the chest wall, as is done during a regular echocardiogram.

Why did my doctor request that a TEE be performed?

Some structures in the heart and its four chambers can be seen more clearly than with regular echocardiography. The test is done by a cardiologist who is assisted by technicians in a specially equipped room.

What is the preparation?

You will be asked to sign a permit. Do not eat or drink for at least six hours prior to the test. You may take medications that cannot be skipped, with a small sip of water at the proper time. Please check with your doctor about what medicines must be taken or omitted.

How is it done?

An intravenous line will be inserted in your vein in case medications need to be administered. A small probe may be placed on your finger to check your oxygen level during the test. Your throat will be numbed with a local anesthetic agent using a spray or gargle. Intravenous medicine may be given, if necessary, to relax you. Your doctor may order antibiotics.

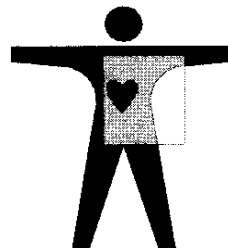
The test takes about 15 to 20 minutes. However, the preparations prior to the test

technician will check your blood pressure and pulse during the test. When the test is about to begin, a flexible tube with lubricating gel will be passed down your throat. The tube does not interfere with your breathing. The doctor looks at your heart structure and the images (pictures) are recorded on a tape and TV monitor.

What happens after the test?

The anesthetic you were given will need time to wear off before you will be able to swallow safely. Do not eat or drink for at least two hours or until your "swallowing reflex" (ability to swallow) has returned. You may resume regular meals, activities and medications two hours after the end of the test if your throat is recovered, and you feel no ill effects. Do not drive a car. You should plan to have someone drive you to the test and home after the test. Please call your doctor if you have fever, chills, chest pains, bleeding or abdominal pain. The results of the test will be interpreted and sent to your doctor. He/she will discuss the results with you.

If you have any questions, write them on the back of this sheet and call the Echocardiography Department at 448-5812.



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