

Echocardiogram/TEE

Ultrasounds provide safe, accurate pictures of internal body structures. When used specifically to evaluate the size and function of the heart, an ultrasound is called an echocardiogram.

Expertise in Matters of the Heart

An echocardiogram creates an image of your heart's valves and chambers by emitting high frequency sound waves and receiving the echoes as they bounce off internal structures. A doctor may use an echocardiogram to:

- Evaluate your heart's overall function.
- Check for indications of heart disease or heart failure.
- Follow the progress of a heart condition over time.
- Monitor the effectiveness of medication or surgical treatment.

Transthoracic echocardiogram

This is the standard echocardiogram, during which an image of the heart is created by passing a wand, called a transducer, along the outside of your chest. This procedure is non-invasive and painless.

Patient preparation: There is no specific preparation for this test. Eat, drink, and take all medications as you normally would.

What to expect: The technician, or sonographer, will use a small amount of water-based gel that allows the transducer to glide smoothly on



the surface of your chest. This non-irritating gel creates a cooling sensation, while the movement of the transducer is accompanied by slight pressure. During most of the exam you will lie on your left side, although the sonographer may ask you to change positions to take pictures of different areas of your heart. The test will take about 40 minutes.

Transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE)

For this test, a cardiologist will be present to insert a small ultrasound transducer into your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach). Because the esophagus is located right behind the heart, this echocardiogram produces clear pictures without the interference of the lungs and chest.

Patient preparation: Do not eat, drink or take medications 6 hours prior to your scheduled appointment. Arrange transportation home after your test since you may feel groggy from the sedative.

What to expect: For a TEE, you will receive IV medication that places you under conscious sedation. During conscious sedation you are awake and responsive but will feel little discomfort. Your breathing will not be affected. Because of the sedative, many people do not remember the procedure.

A small transducer on a long tube will be passed through your mouth and into your esophagus until it reaches a position close to your heart. From there, the transducer will create a clear image of your heart in motion. Your vital signs and alertness will be monitored throughout this test. After the TEE is completed, the tube is withdrawn. Your vital signs will be monitored for 20-30 minutes afterward. You may not eat or drink until the anesthetic spray wears off—which takes about an hour. The entire procedure lasts about 90 minutes.

Risks: Ultrasonic waves are harmless and painless. Conscious sedation

(continued on back)

Heart Center of the Rockies, the region's premier heart center, is dedicated to providing a comprehensive program of advanced cardiovascular care throughout Colorado, Wyoming and western Nebraska.

is very safe when administered by qualified health professionals; however, emergency equipment and trained personnel are available in the testing area in the event of complications. A brief period of amnesia during conscious sedation is common. Occasional side effects may include headache, drowsiness or nausea. Patients should not drive a vehicle, operate machinery or make important decisions for approximately 24 hours following conscious sedation.

Test Results:

Test results will be discussed with you by your doctor.

Details of Your Upcoming Echocardiogram:

Appointment Date: _____

Appointment Time: _____ Check in Time: _____

You are scheduled for:

- Transthoracic echocardiogram
(Please check in 15 minutes prior to your echocardiogram)
- Transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE)
Harmony Campus with Cardiology consult
(The check in time allows for nursing assessment and preparation prior to your TEE.)

Location:

- Fort Collins – Harmony Campus
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- Estes Park Office
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- Fort Morgan Office
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- Scottsbluff Office
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- Steamboat Springs Office
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