



Echocardiogram

WHAT IS AN ECHOCARDIOGRAM?

An echocardiogram ('echo') is an imaging test that uses harmless sound waves. It shows the size of your heart and how well your heart muscle and valves are working. A probe (a hand-held device that looks like a microphone) is used to send sound waves toward your heart. Your heart will create echoes which are 'caught' by the probe and returned to a computer. The computer changes the sound waves into images that are seen on a monitor. These images help the doctor evaluate your heart and plan your medical care.

BEFORE YOUR ECHO

- There is NO special preparation for an echocardiogram.
- You should wear a two-piece outfit to your test as you will be required to undress from the waist up. Ladies will be given a hospital gown to put on.
- PLEASE ARRIVE 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO YOUR APPOINTMENT TIME. (Failure to do so may result in your test being rescheduled.)
- The visit/examination will take approximately 1 hour. We do our very best to stay on time, however some patients may require more time for this test than others. We know your time is valuable. Your patience is appreciated.

DURING YOUR ECHO

- Small electrodes are placed on your chest to monitor your heart beat.
- A transducer coated with gel is moved firmly across your chest.
- At times, you may be asked to inhale or exhale and hold your breath for a few seconds. Air in the lungs can affect the images.
- The images are recorded which are reviewed by the heart specialist the same day.
- You will be asked to lie on your left side on an exam bed.

AFTER YOUR ECHO

There are no restrictions following an echocardiogram. Once your test is finished, you may continue your normal routine.

YOUR TEST RESULTS

The results of your echo will be sent to your doctor within 1-2 business days. If you do not have an appointment for a follow-up visit, please contact your family doctor directly about the results.