

Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

WHAT IS A TEE?

TEE is an ultrasound test that has been available for many years that involves good quality, close up pictures of the heart by way of the esophagus or “food pipe”. A transesophageal echocardiogram examines the structure and function of the heart in more detail than a surface ultrasound can.

HOW IS IT DONE?

The study is done by first having local anesthetic (a bitter tasting ‘freezing’) sprayed onto the tongue and throat to temporarily dull the gag reflex. The test requires swallowing a small “camera” measuring approximately ½ inch diameter (the size of your fingertip). The ultrasound camera is on the end of the gastroscope which is gently positioned in the esophagus with the use of a lubricant. An intravenous line will be set up and sedative medications will be given so that you will feel comfortable and sleepy. The test itself takes approximately 30 minutes, but you will be expected to be at the hospital for approximately 2 hours.

TEE is a very safe test. Minor trauma to the esophagus can rarely occur causing a temporary sore throat. It is important not to eat or drink for at least one hour following the test to allow the freezing to wear off and the gag reflex to return to normal before taking a meal. Because you may feel a bit “groggy” following the test, you will need to have someone drive you home after the study and you should not drive a motor vehicle for at least eight hours.

Preparation: ** Patients should NOT take INSULIN in the morning on this day **

1. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight.
2. Please wear comfortable clothing.
3. Continue to take all of your medications unless otherwise advised by your cardiologist. *Morning medications must be taken with only a small sip of water.*
4. Please bring a list of your medications with you.
5. Please arrange to be picked up after the test as you will not be allowed to drive until the day following the procedure.
6. This test will take approximately ½ an hour but you will be expected to be at the hospital for approximately 2 hours.
7. Please be advised that you may not be able to work the day of the test due to sedation given during the test.