

Transesophageal Echocardiography

Transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) is a procedure (similar to an Endoscopy) that uses a special ultrasound probe to take better-quality images of your heart. TEE takes more detailed pictures of your heart and the aorta and is used when the doctors need more detail than a standard echocardiogram can give them.

Unlike a standard echocardiogram, the echo transducer that produces the sound waves for TEE is attached to a flexible thin tube that passes through your mouth, down your throat and into your esophagus. Because the esophagus is so close to the upper chambers of the heart, very clear images of those heart structures, aorta, valves and outer lining of the heart can be obtained.

Why Do People Need a TEE?

Doctors use TEE to find problems in your heart's structure and function. TEE can give clearer pictures of the upper chambers of the heart, and the valves between the upper and lower chambers of the heart, than standard echocardiograms. Doctors may also use TEE if you have a thick chest wall, are obese, or have bandages on your chest.

The detailed pictures provided by TEE can help doctors see:

- The size of your heart and how thick its walls are.
- How well your heart is pumping.
- If there is abnormal tissue around your heart valves that could indicate bacterial, viral or fungal infections, or cancer.
- If blood is leaking backward through your heart valves (regurgitation) or if your valves are narrowed or blocked (stenosis).
- If blood clots are in the chambers of your heart, in particular the upper chamber, for example after a stroke.

TEE is often used to provide information during surgery to repair heart valves, a tear in the aorta or congenital heart lesions. It's also used during surgical treatment for endocarditis, a bacterial infection of the inner lining of the heart and valves.

What Should I Expect?

- Before the test begins, the staff will connect you to equipment that monitors your vital signs. This equipment includes a blood pressure cuff, and heart monitor to track your heart rate and rhythm, and a finger probe to check your oxygen level.
 - An intravenous line (IV) will be placed in your arm. You will get fluid and medications through this line
 - An anesthesiologist will give you medication through the IV to fall asleep for the procedure and will monitor you throughout the procedure
 - There are no lasting effects of the procedure, though you may have a mild sore throat for a day or two after.
 - The procedure takes about 45 minutes to complete. You will be monitored after the test is over, until you are fully awake.
 - You will be given additional discharge instructions from the nursing staff before you are discharged home
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How Do I Prepare For the Test?

This test is performed in a hospital or outpatient procedure setting. You will receive special instructions from one of our procedure coordinators who will review the following instructions:

- On the day of the procedure, you CAN NOT drive yourself. You must have a ride to and from the facility
 - We will contact your insurance company for preauthorization and/or referral information. If a referral is required, we will fax a referral request to your primary care provider
 - The hospital will call you on the day prior to the procedure with your assigned scheduled arrival time and to review instructions
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- Please bring a list of all of your medications (including the dose and how often you take them), insurance cards, and any required referrals if you obtained them from your primary care provider
 - You cannot have anything to eat or drink after midnight on the night prior to your procedure
 - Wear comfortable clothing
 - If you have diabetes, do not take your diabetes medications on the morning of the procedure. However, please bring those diabetic medications with you to the hospital. Unless otherwise indicated, take all of your other medications with a small sip of water on the morning of your procedure
 - If your procedure is scheduled at St Francis Medical Center (*link to website*), ask your driver to park and enter at the Chambers Street Entrance/ Parking Garage. St Francis offers free valet parking as well as self parking
 - You will be asked to sign a consent form which gives the doctor permission to perform the test. The procedure and any risks involved will be carefully explained to you prior to the test
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