Transesophageal Echocardiography (TEE)

Why do I need this test?

This test is known as a TEE. Your doctor has ordered this test to check your heart.

We will give you medicine to relax. Then, we will guide a long, thin tube (about the width of an adult’s little finger) down your throat. Before the tube reaches your stomach, it will stop at a place behind your heart.

On the tip of the tube is a device that sends out sound waves. You won’t feel the sound waves. As they pass through your body, they will create pictures of your heart on a video screen.

How do I get ready for the test?

- Plan to have someone drive you home after the test.
  □ Someone should also stay with you for 6 hours after your test.

- **No food or drink for:** □ 4 hours before the test  □ 6 hours before the test

- **If you take antacids or water pills (diuretics):** Do not take them until after your test. You may take blood pressure medicine with a few sips of water.

- **If you have diabetes:**
  - If you take insulin, call your diabetes care team. Ask if you should take a ½ dose the morning of your test.
  - If you take diabetes medicine by mouth, don’t take it on the morning of your test. Bring it with you to take after the test. (If you have questions, call your diabetes care team.)

- Bring a list of any medicines you are taking.

What happens during this test?

The exam itself takes about 15 to 30 minutes. Plan to spend about 4 hours in the hospital or clinic.

If you wear glasses, dentures or dental bridges, you will need to remove them.

1. We will place an IV (small needle) into your hand or arm. You will receive medicine through the IV to help you relax. The medicine also makes it easier to swallow the tube. It will not put you to sleep or change your breathing.

2. We may inject **special fluid** through your IV. This will help us get a clear picture of your heart.

   - If we use saline (salt water), this is called a “bubble study.” We will mix the salt water until small bubbles form, then inject it through your IV. The bubbles will help us track blood flow through the heart.

   - **Optison and Definity** are medicines that contain tiny gas bubbles. These reflect sound waves, giving a clearer picture of the heart.
3. We will spray a numbing medicine onto your throat. This helps prevent pain and gagging.

4. We will ask you to either gargle a small amount of numbing solution, or swallow a teaspoon of thick, flavored jelly.

5. You will lie on your back or on your left side.

6. The doctor will help you swallow the tube. You will hold a plastic mouthpiece between your teeth to protect the tip of the tube.

7. Sound waves will pass from the tube through your body. Pictures of your heart will appear on the video screen.

The test is not painful, but you may feel some discomfort when you start to swallow the tube. To help yourself relax, breathe at a slow, even pace. Try to relax the muscles in your neck and shoulders.

While the tube is in your throat, you will be able to breathe normally. You will not be able to talk.

**What are the risks and benefits of this test?**

This test will tell us more about your heart. It helps your doctor decide what kind of treatment you may need (if any). Risks include:

- A bad reaction to the medicines you receive
- Bruising or infection at the needle site
- Gagging and vomiting (throwing up)
- Damage to your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach).

**How will I feel after the test?**

You will rest in the exam area until you feel ready to leave. Plan to spend at least one hour resting. You will need someone to take you home and stay with you for at least six hours.

- You will feel drowsy or a little dizzy.
- Your throat may feel numb.
- If your mouth is dry, rinse your mouth with water.

**Do not eat or drink** for at least 30 minutes. After that, you may try a little water. If you can swallow, you may go back to your normal eating, drinking and medicines.

**Do not drive** for 24 hours.

You may have a mild sore throat for the rest of the day. Throat lozenges or ice chips will help. Call your clinic right away if you have:

- New pain (including chest or belly pain) or trouble swallowing.
- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds or contains blood.
- Black or bloody stools (bowel movements).
- A fever above 100.6°F (37.5°C), taken under the tongue.

**When will I know my results?**

You should have your results within a few days. If you have not heard from us within one week, call your doctor.

*If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please let us know. We provide many free services including sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, TTYs, telephone amplifiers, note takers and written materials.*