



Trans-Esophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

TEE is a procedure that offers a much clearer image of the heart than a standard echocardiogram. A flexible endoscope with an echo transducer is passed through the mouth into the esophagus. The esophagus sits behind the heart. From inside the esophagus, the echo beam does not have to travel through the chest wall. It offers a clearer image of the heart, especially the back structures, that may not be seen as clearly with a regular echocardiogram. The cardiologist can rotate the endoscope and examine the heart from different angles.

A TEE is extremely useful in detecting blood clots, masses and tumors located inside the heart. It can also detect certain valve problems and infection of the heart valves. Certain congenital heart diseases, such as an atrial septal defect (a small hole between the upper chambers of the heart) can be detected. It can also detect a tear of the aorta – the major artery in the body. TEE's can be useful in evaluating patients who have had strokes as a result of blood clots. The TEE may detect the responsible clot inside the left upper chamber (the atrium) of the heart.

Prior to the procedure:

You should not eat or drink anything after midnight the day before your procedure – or for at least 8 hours prior to the start of your procedure. Please discuss with your doctor whether he wants you to take any of your daily medicines on the morning of your procedure, for example, medicine for your blood pressure.

What to expect during the procedure:

A TEE is done in the endoscopy department. Your doctor will give you medicine through an IV to help you relax and be more comfortable during the procedure. For your safety, a monitor will record your blood pressure, pulse, blood oxygen levels, as well as the heart rate and rhythm continuously throughout the procedure. You will lie on your side, and your doctor will pass the endoscope through your mouth and into the esophagus. The endoscope doesn't interfere with your breathing. Most patients consider the test only slightly uncomfortable, and many patients fall asleep during the procedure.

What to expect after the procedure:

The procedure itself usually takes 20 to 30 minutes, although you should plan on being at the hospital for about two to three hours. This includes preparation and recovery time. The medicine you receive may make it difficult for you to remember what the doctor or nurses tell you after your procedure. It is helpful to have someone with you who can also hear the instructions and stay with you on the day of the procedure. You cannot operate machinery or drive a motorized vehicle for 24 hours after the procedure. Please make arrangements for someone to be at the hospital to take you home.