



ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

What it is

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of the heart. It is performed to better assess the structure of the heart including the muscle function, valve function and size of the great vessels such as the aorta. It is one of the most common non-invasive tests performed in cardiology

One of our sonographers will meet you in the waiting room and provide you with a gown in which to get ready. You will need to remove all your clothes from the waist up and wear the gown open to the front like a coat. There is no risk to the procedure and no radiation is used.

Performance/Preparation

Once you are in the gown, the sonographer will place electrodes (adhesive patches) on your chest to monitor your heart rhythm. After that, you will be instructed to turn on your left side and using a transducer with ultrasound gel, images will be taken of your heart. There are many images that need to be taken but the majority of the exam will be with you on your left side.

Images are taken from next to the breastbone, near the nipple, the upper abdomen and on the bottom part of your neck. You may hear sounds from the machine reflecting measurement of blood flow across your valves.

There is no special preparation required with respect to fasting or holding medications. Rarely, there may be some irritation to the skin from the gel but this is very uncommon. Please do not wear scented perfumes or powders and the test cannot be performed while wearing a Holter monitor.

Duration

The examination will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Our sonographers are not allowed to discuss findings with you and your cardiologist or your primary care physician should do this.

Medications

You may take your medications as prescribed and feel free to eat prior to the test if you wish.

Driving

There are no restrictions to driving either commercially or privately after an echocardiogram.