



TRANS-ESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY (TEE)

What it is

A trans-esophageal echocardiogram (TEE) is a procedure performed to visualize structures in the heart that are not as well visualized using a conventional echocardiogram where pictures are taken in front of the chest. A TEE utilizes a flexible tube with an ultrasound transducer that is passed down your throat and into your esophagus (where food goes before entering your stomach). It is mainly used to detect clots in the heart, evidence of infection of native or artificial heart valves and to detect complications from heart surgery. The risk of the procedure is about 1 in 5,000 of any major complications. You will be asked to sign a consent form.

Performance/Preparation

Once you are in the gown, the sonographer and technologist will place electrodes (adhesive patches) on your chest to monitor your heart rhythm and heart rate. An intravenous (IV) will also be placed in your hand or arm. After that, the cardiologist may use a numbing liquid and ask you to gargle and swallow it before spraying your tongue and the back of your throat with an anesthetic agent to numb the tongue and throat. Once your mouth is frozen, a bite-guard mouthpiece will be placed in your mouth to protect your teeth and you will be instructed to turn on your left side. The cardiologist will administer some medication through an intravenous (IV) to make you sleepy and the probe will be introduced into your esophagus where images will be taken.

The test is generally well tolerated and you may have a sore throat for an hour or two after it is completed. Please do not eat or drink anything 6 hours prior to the test (nothing after midnight for an early morning procedure).

After the test is over, you are not able to eat or drink anything for 1 hour. Start with cool liquids to ensure the anesthetic has worn off and to ensure it does not go down the trachea (windpipe). Do not consume hot liquids for 2-3 hours. You may feel drowsy for a short period of time following the test. If you have a sore throat that has not gone away after a couple of days or you have pain or difficulty swallowing, contact your doctor right away.

Duration

The examination will take about 1 hour. The cardiologist may briefly discuss findings with you but it is suggested to wait for them to perform the full analysis and generate a report for the ordering physician.

Medications

You may take your medications with small sips of water on the morning of the procedure and please bring a list of your medications to the appointment. If you are on insulin, take half the usual dose of your long-acting insulin in the morning or contact your physician for further instructions.

Driving

You are instructed not to drive for the remainder of the day after the test (minimum 12 hours) and 24 hours following the test given the sedation. Please arrange for someone to transport you from the hospital, as you will not be able to drive following the procedure.