

Transthoracic Echocardiography:

A transthoracic echocardiogram creates images of the heart using an ultrasound transducer placed on your chest wall. The ultrasound can see through the skin and chest wall all the way to your heart and create live motion pictures of cardiac structure and function. You will not feel the ultrasound, but you will feel a slight pressure of the transducer on your chest and you will be able to see the live motion images of your heart beating. The examination takes 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Detailed instructions about the examination are as follows:

- Unless your doctor tells you otherwise, continue to take your medications normally.
- There are no special dietary requirements, such as fasting or drinking of water.
- Once in the exam room, cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices should be turned off or set to the "vibrate only" mode.
- You may have one other family member may stay with you during your exam, if you wish.
- Ultrasound pictures will be made through the front of your chest wall and upper abdomen, so clothing must be removed from the upper body. Females will be covered by a gown to maintain privacy. Sheets, blankets, and pillows are available for your comfort.
- You may continue to wear glasses, dentures, and hearing aids during the test.
- If you have a pacemaker and/or defibrillator, this will not interfere with the exam.
- Please tell our staff if you have an allergy to latex.
- There is no radiation involved with the exam; only sound waves which are harmless to you and technologist.
- Please avoid jewelry that hangs down to the chest and/or lotions, oils, or powders that may inhibit the adhesive of EKG electrodes.
- Please tell the sonographer if you have an allergy to latex products or rubber gloves.
- You will be asked to lie still on your left side and back. Please tell the sonographer if your ability to lie is limited.
- Exam time ranges between 30 to 45 minutes, depending upon the clarity and complexity of your imaging and your underlying condition.
- During the exam, the sonographer will apply an odorless, water-soluble, hypoallergenic gel onto your chest and move a transducer probe around different locations of the chest wall. Mild pressure will be applied to the transducer. If this pressure is uncomfortable, please let the sonographer know.
- An echo imaging agent may be used to optimize the cardiac images. These agents are given intravenously by one of the echo lab nurses and their use does not indicate that your exam is abnormal. Please let us know if you have a venous access line in place (e.g.: Mediport), as this access line can often be used for the contrast injection.
- Training physicians, students, or other imaging staff may observe or participate in your exam.
- The sonographer is not legally able to answer questions about the results of your exam.
- A physician with special training in echocardiography will review your images in detail and issue a final report to the physician ordering the exam in less than 24 hours.
- Once the test is complete, you may resume normal activities without restriction.
- Your images and reports are stored for future review and comparison. Your records are confidential and accessible only by your healthcare providers.
- Stored images and reports may be used for education, research or quality control purposes. All healthcare information used for these purposes are stripped of personal information.