

# What is Echocardiography?



Cardiology Department

## What is Echocardiography?

Echocardiography, also called an echo test or heart ultrasound, is a test that takes "moving pictures of the heart with sound waves. You don't have to stay in the hospital. It's not surgery and doesn't hurt.



*Echocardiography is a simple and painless procedure that uses sound waves to take pictures" of your heart.*

## Why do I need an echo test?

Your doctor may use an echo test to look at your heart's structure and check how well your heart is working.

### **This test may be needed if....**

- You have a heart murmur.
- You've had a heart attack.
- You have unexplained chest pains.
- You've had rheumatic fever.
- You have a congenital heart defect.

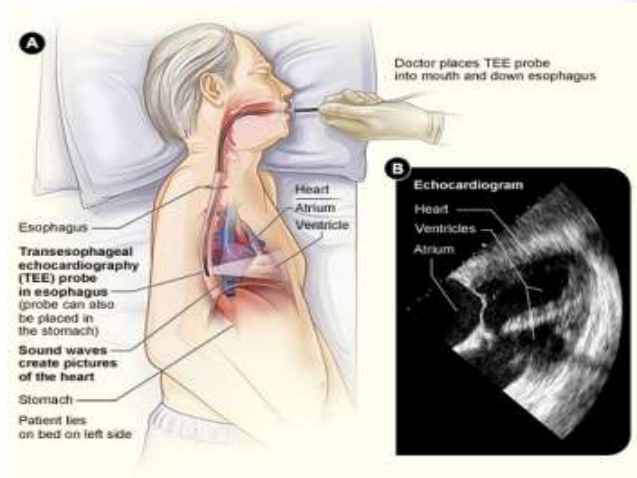
## How is it done?

Echo tests are done by trained sonographers. You may have your test done in your doctor's office, an emergency room, an operating room, a hospital clinic or a hospital room.

- You'll lie on a bed on your left side or back.
- The sonographer will put special jelly on a probe and move it over your chest area.
- Ultra-high-frequency sound waves will pick up images of your heart and valves. No X-rays will be used.
- Your heart's movements can be seen on a screen.
- You can sometimes watch your heart during the test.

- It usually takes 45-30 minutes
- It's painless and has no side effects.

*Sometimes the probe needs to be closer to your heart to give clearer pictures. You may need a special test called Trans esophageal chocardiography (TEE).*



- As you swallow, a cardiologist will gently pass a tube with a probe on the end of it down your throat and into the esophagus. (This is the tube connecting your mouth to your stomach).
- Sound waves will pick up images as explained above.
- When the test is finished, the cardiologist will gently pull the probe out.
- You may feel a need to cough.

### What can the test show?

- The size and shape of your heart.
- How well your heart is working overall.
- If a wall or section of heart muscle is weak and not working correctly.
- If you have problems with your heart's valves.
- If you have a blood clot.

### What happens after the echo?

- Your sonographer will help you clean the gel from your chest.
- Your doctor will talk with you after looking at your echo pictures and discuss what the pictures show.



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