

TRANSOESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

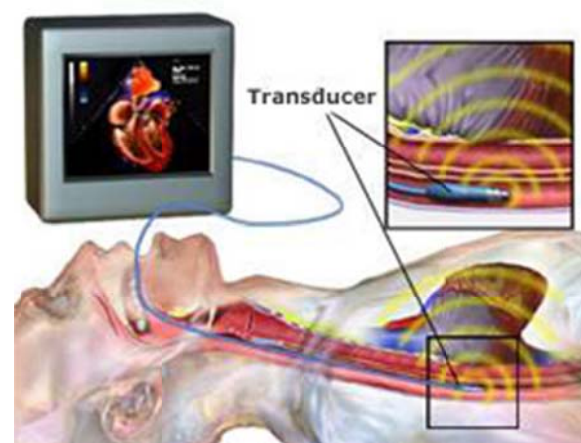
What is a Transoesophageal Echocardiogram?

Transoesophageal echocardiography is the term given to an ultrasound examination of your heart via an endoscope (a long, thin, flexible instrument) placed inside your oesophagus or food pipe. The technique is the same as the transthoracic echocardiograph in which high frequency sound waves are used to create a moving picture of your heart.

Why am I having a transoesophageal echo?

Sometimes the normal echo examination is unable to visualize certain areas of the heart or due to technical difficulties (rib space, lung disease, obesity) image quality may not be satisfactory enough to provide all the necessary information. In these cases a much clearer picture of the heart can be obtained by passing the probe down the throat and into the oesophagus. Your oesophagus is situated very close to the heart which allows very clear, detailed pictures to be taken. Transoesophageal echo is sometimes used to monitor heart function during heart surgery and also

used to guide some procedures done during cardiac catheterization.

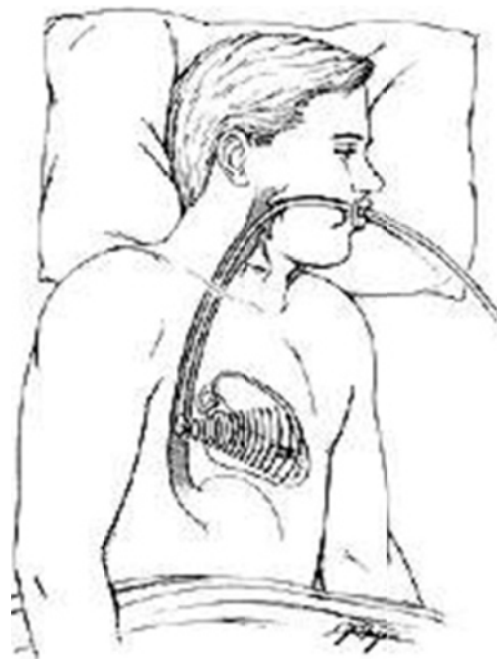


Preparation for the test:

The test will be performed as an inpatient and therefore will require admission into hospital. You will be required to fast for at least 6 hours prior to the procedure.

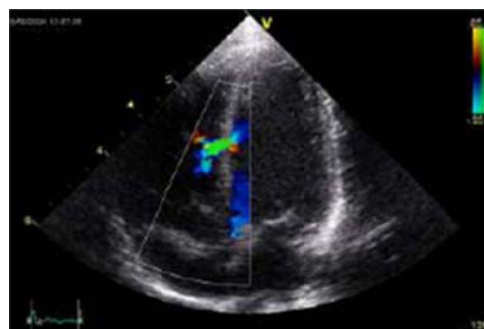
How is the test performed?

A Cardiologist will be performing the transoesophageal echo along with an Anaesthetist and Nursing staff. An IV line will be placed into your arm and medications given to put you into a light sleep. Your electrocardiogram, oxygen saturation and other vital signs will be monitored during and after the procedure. You will be asked to lie on your left side with your head tilted slightly. A mouth guard may be inserted to protect your teeth. The probe will then be guided into your mouth while the Cardiologist gently presses your tongue out of the way. You may be asked to swallow to help move the probe down your oesophagus. The actual procedure usually takes between 10 and 20 minutes.



After the test is completed:

For several hours after the test you may feel sleepy and have a dry or mildly sore throat. Also due to the nature of some of the medications you will not be able to remember much of the test.



Risks:

A transoesophageal echo is an invasive procedure with some risk. Some of these risks are breathing problems, abnormal or slow heart rhythm, drug reactions and minor bleeding. In extremely rare cases, perforation or tearing of the oesophagus could occur.