



ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

What is an echocardiogram?

Echocardiogram or Echocardiography is the term given to the ultrasound examination of your heart. It is a test in which high frequency sound waves are used to create a moving picture of your heart.

Preparation for the test:

No particular preparation is required for the test.

How is the test performed?

Your Cardiologist, or a trained and accredited Sonographer will be performing the test. An instrument (transducer) that transmits and receives high frequency sound waves will be placed in various positions on your chest. These different positions allow the Sonographer to examine the entire heart from multiple angles and directions. The transducer picks up the echoes of the sound waves and transmits them as electrical impulses. The echocardiography machine then converts these impulses into moving pictures.

What should I expect?

You will be required to be bare-chested and lie down on an examination table. ECG electrodes will be placed on your chest and you will then be asked to roll onto your side. The transducer probe will be placed on your chest to take the pictures. Usually an ultrasonographic jelly is used to improve contact and imaging quality. The probe may need to be applied firmly against the chest wall and the Sonographer will ask you if this causes discomfort. A number of sites are utilized: the left side adjacent to the sternum (breast bone), the apex, which is just under the left breast, the upper abdomen and sometimes the neck. You may hear loud noises throughout your echocardiogram. This sound represents the magnified ultrasonographic signal of the blood flowing through your heart chambers and valves and is completely normal. The scanning time will be approximately 40 minutes, although this may vary depending upon the findings.