

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN ECHOCARDIOGRAM

Date of Test: _____ Arrival Time: _____ Time of Test: _____

What is the purpose of an echocardiogram?

Your physician has scheduled you for an echocardiogram in order to learn about your heart's size, shape, movement, and surrounding structures. This test is not painful. It will last 30 minutes or less, and you do not have to prepare for the test. It is not necessary to bring your medications with you for this test.

What will I experience during my echocardiogram?

Prior to the exam you will be asked to undress from the waist up and put on a hospital gown. The lab will be darkened to help the technician view the monitor.

The technician will ask you to lie on the table, either on your back or on your side. An instrument called a transducer will be placed on your chest with a small amount of gel. Three electrodes will be placed on your chest in order to record the electrical activity of your heart.

The ultrasound system generates high-frequency sound waves above the range of human hearing. The transducer will transmit them toward your heart. The sound waves will bounce off your heart walls, valves, and surrounding structures and will be received back to the same transducer. These sound waves, or echoes, will be translated electronically into an image of your heart and its structures that will appear on the monitor. The technician obtains a series of heart images by positioning the transducer at different angles to observe different parts of your heart. You may be asked to breathe in and out slowly or hold your breath. Remember to remain still during the test because movements can distort results.

Your physician will review the calculations made from the images and the entire recording. When your test is completed, you may be asked to schedule an office visit with your physician to discuss the test results, or your physician may choose to call you with the results.