

WHAT IS A TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM (TEE)?

A transesophageal echocardiogram is a method of examining the heart by use of an ultrasound probe placed in your esophagus. This probe is a soft tube, which has ultrasound transducer at its tip. The probe is passed through your mouth into your esophagus. You can still breathe easily during this procedure. Pictures of your heart can be taken, without discomfort, through the scope. These pictures are very high quality because the lungs and ribs are not causing any interference. It takes about two weeks for you doctor to get the reports from the test.

Preparation For the TEE:

- Your stomach must be empty. You will be asked to have nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before the exam. Your doctor's office will give you instructions. Phone the office if you haven't received instruction 2 days before the date of your test or if you have any other questions.

What will happen?

Admission:

1. Report to the Royal Jubilee Hospital admitting desk to process the necessary papers. You will be required to sign a consent form before any procedure, giving your permission to have the procedure done. You should understand what is going to be done before signing it.
2. You will be taken to the Ambulatory D&T Unit.
3. A nurse will ask you several questions about allergies, medications, health problems, your weight, etc.
4. You will need to undress from the waist up and put on a hospital gown.
5. The nurse will start an intravenous (IV). This will be used later to give you medication to make you sleepy and relaxed (sedation) in the procedure room. There may be a short waiting period before your test is done. Your nurse will answer any question you may have at this time.
6. The procedure will be done in the Echocardiography Laboratory.

The Procedure for TEE:

1. You will be taken to the Echocardiography Lab.
2. Your doctor will give you the sedation at this time and will spray your throat with freezing to numb your gag reflex.
3. The scope is then inserted into your mouth and passed down your esophagus. This DOES NOT interfere with your breathing. You may feel some abdominal cramping and pressure.
4. The TEE exam takes about 15 minutes, but you may require additional Transthoracic Echo images. This could take up to another 30 minutes.

After the Procedure:

1. You will be taken back to the Ambulatory D&T area where you will remain for approximately 1 hour, until the effects of the sedation wear off. The nurse will check your pulse and blood pressure often.
2. You must be taken home – **You Cannot Drive** – until the next day as the sedation results in impaired reflexes and judgment. Going home ALONE, by taxi or public transportation is not acceptable.
3. You cannot eat or drink for 2 hours from the time your throat was sprayed. Slowly start back on fluids, then solid foods. Try drinking some water. If you can swallow comfortably, you can progress with solids.
4. Sedation might make you forgetful. It is common for you not to remember the procedure or talking to your doctor.

Risks:

A simple Transesophageal Echocardiogram has few risks. Problems with reactions to the sedation rarely occur. Redness and soreness at the IV site may occur (phlebitis) (A tender lump develops which lasts several weeks, but eventually goes away). Warm, wet cloths may help reduce the tenderness. If it persists or gets worse contact your doctor. Your throat may be sore after the procedure and there may be some mild bleeding with red-tinged sputum. If this persists for more than 24 hours or if you are vomiting any amount of red or dark blood call your doctor immediately or go to the emergency department.