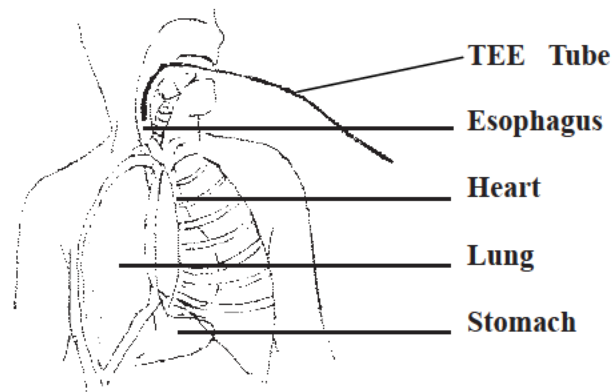


Transesophageal Echocardiography (TEE)

What is a TEE?

TEE is a test that uses painless sound waves to see the heart and other structures inside your body. For this test, the doctor puts a small tube into your mouth and down your esophagus (food pipe). Your throat is numbed, so you should feel little or no discomfort. The tip of the tube can send out sound waves that “echo” within your chest. The echoes are picked up by a computer, which creates pictures of your heart and major vessels for the doctor to see.



Why am I having a TEE?

Your doctor has ordered a TEE to get information about your heart and other structures inside your chest. A TEE can

- Find congenital defects
- Find heart muscle and valve problems
- Check if an artificial valve is working well.
- Find the source of blood clots in patients who have had a stroke.

How long does the TEE take?

The doctor will tell you what time to arrive at the hospital if you are coming from home. The test will take about 20 to 40 minutes. You should allow 2 to 3 hours from the time you arrive until the time you can leave.

Who will perform my TEE?

A cardiologist will do the TEE. This doctor will meet with you to review your medical history and examine you. He or she will need to know:

- What medication you take.
- If you are allergic to any medication, latex, etc.
- If you have ulcers, a hiatal hernia, or problems swallowing.
- If you think you may be pregnant. Sedatives are usually given before a TEE, and the doctor may need to change the dose to protect your baby.

What will I be asked to do before the test?

- You will be asked to sign a consent form, after the doctor or nurse has explained the test, its benefits, and possible risks. **Be sure to ask any questions you may have.**
- Do not eat or drink anything for 8 hours before the test.
- You may take your medication with small sips of water, unless told otherwise.
- Please remove any dentures, partials or eyeglasses just before the test. You should still wear your hearing aid, if you have one.
- Please use the restroom right before the test.

What else happens before the test?

You will be taken to a room where the TEE is done, and helped into bed. Besides the cardiologist, a nurse and a technician will remain in the room with you during the test.

If you do not already have an IV (intravenous) line in your arm, the nurse will start one by putting a small needle into a vein. You will probably be given a sedative through the IV to help you relax. The medication may make you feel sleepy, but you will still be awake and able to follow instructions.

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Small pads with wires will be placed on your chest and connected to a monitor to watch your heart rhythm. You will also have a blood pressure cuff on your arm to check your blood pressure every few minutes.

Since a sedative may slow your breathing, a small monitor will be placed on your finger to watch your blood oxygen level. More oxygen can easily be given to you through a small plastic tube placed beneath your nose, if the doctor feels it is needed.

What happens during the test?

- The doctor will numb your throat with a spray medicine. You will then be asked to lie on your left side.
- The doctor will ask you to take slow, deep breaths; this will help to relax the muscles in the back of your throat.
- You will be asked to put your chin to your chest and open your mouth. A small plastic guard will be put between your teeth to prevent you from accidentally biting on the tube.
- As the doctor gently inserts the tube into your throat, he or she will ask you to swallow. As you swallow, the tube is slowly placed in your esophagus.
- The nurse will suction your mouth, as needed, to remove any secretions.
- You may feel the doctor moving the probe, but it should not be painful or interfere with your breathing.
- When the test is finished, the doctor will slowly remove the tube.
- The nurse will continue to watch you until you are fully awake to be sure your blood pressure, breathing, and heart rhythm are stable.

What happens after the test?

- If you are staying in the hospital as a patient, you will be brought back to your room.
- If you are going home after the test, you will need a friend or family member to take you (the sedative may leave you too groggy to drive).
- You should not eat or drink anything for 1 hour, since your throat will still be numb. After this time, you may return to your regular diet.
- You may have a slightly sore throat for up to 4 hours after the effects of the medicine wear off. If your throat is sore, you can try cold drinks and lozenges to relieve the soreness.

If you have had sedation, you need to avoid the following for at least 24 hours:

- Driving or operating heavy or potentially harmful equipment – **make sure to have someone drive you home after your test**
- Returning to work
- Drinking alcohol
- Making important decisions

Be sure to follow any other instructions you may receive from your doctor or nurse.

Call your doctor if you have these symptoms:

- Bleeding from your mouth
- Fever over 101° F by mouth
- Pain at the site of your IV for more than a day
- Sore throat lasting more than 2 days