

Echocardiography (Echo)

Getting Ready

- When you schedule your test, ask if you should eat or take any medications on the day of your test.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows easy access to the chest.
- Arrive early to check in. The test itself takes a short time.

What Happens During an Echo

- You will be asked to remove the clothing on your upper body or the left side of your chest.
- Small pads (**electrodes**) are placed on your chest to monitor your heartbeat.
- A device (**transducer**) coated with cool gel is moved firmly over your chest. This device creates the sound waves that make images of your heart.
- At times, you may be asked to exhale (breathe out) and not breathe in for a few seconds. Air in the lungs can affect the images.
- The images are recorded so your doctor can review them later.
- After obtaining the necessary information, the sonographer will remove the transducer and electrodes.

During Echo, harmless sound waves are bounced off your heart, then beamed back and converted to images on a screen. These images show how well your heart muscle and valves are working. It also shows how large your heart is. The test is performed by a **sonographer**, a specially trained technician.

After the Test

- You can resume your normal activity.
- The results are sent to your doctor.
- Be sure to keep your follow-up appointment.

Tell your doctor or the sonographer if:

- You are taking any medications.
- You experience any chest discomfort.

