Echocardiogram

What is an Echocardiogram (Echo)?

This test uses ultrasound to give information about your heart's size, valves and function.

How is it done?

A hand-held transducer placed on the chest wall sends out soundwaves (ultrasound) that identify different structures of your heart. Ultrasound provides images of the heart pumping as well as showing the flow of blood through the heart.

What do I do on the day?

Please present yourself at the Reception desk at the Heart Centre, 3rd Floor, Philip Block. Please bring your Medicare Card and the Referral from your doctor (if not already faxed).

Can I eat and drink before my test?

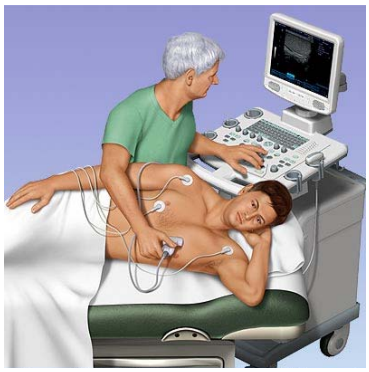
Yes. You do not need to fast.

Do I take my medications on the day of the test?

Take all your normal medications before and during the 24 hour monitoring period.

What happens during the test?

During the echo you will he asked to lie initially on your left side and then flat on your back and the transducer (external probe) will be placed directly on the skin on your chest. A water-based gel is applied to the skin on your chest allowing conduction of the soundwaves from the probe to improve the image quality. Three small sticky electrodes are placed on your shoulders to record your ECG during the test.



When measuring the blood flow through the heart, you will hear "whooshing" sounds which represent the flow of the blood. The ultrasound is painless but at times firm pressure on the chest with the ultrasound probe may be required. The echocardiographer will make numerous measurements throughout the test. During the echo, it is important that you lie quietly and are as relaxed as possible, as this aids the echocardiographer and will reduce the time for the test.

How long does the test take?

Approximately 45 minutes

What are the risks?

Echocardiograms carry no known risks with no known biological effects.

How will I get my results?

The echo is recorded onto a computer and reported by a Cardiologist. The report is then sent to your referring doctor and a copy placed in your medical history. Your referring doctor will discuss the results at your next appointment.

3rd Floor Philip Block
The Alfred Hospital
Commercial Road
Melbourne Vic Australia 3004
Ph: 61 3 90763263/6525
Fax: 03 90762461
h.centre@alfred.org.au
www.alfredheartcentre.org.au