

## Transesophageal Echocardiography (TEE)

A transesophageal echocardiogram is performed when adequate images cannot be obtained of the heart with an ultrasound probe placed on the chest (Tran thoracic Echocardiography), to look at specific structures of the heart that cannot be seen with a surface study and prior to heart valve surgery. This exam is similar to the endoscope that is done by Gastroenterologists to evaluate for ulcers of the stomach

Preparation usually involves an overnight fast or at least **4 hours** prior to the test if it is being done in the afternoon. If you are diabetic, you should ask your doctor for instructions regarding your insulin or diabetic medications on the day of the test. Typically these medications are held or the doses are lowered.

This procedure is typically done in a hospital or an outpatient procedure room of a medical facility with a nurse, physician, and ultrasound technician. ECG leads, blood pressure cuff, and oxygen monitor are placed to assess the patient prior, during and after the procedure. A local anesthetic is used to spray the back of the throat. Mild sedatives are given for relaxation prior to passing the tube. Every effort is made to get the patient as comfortable as possible before the probe is passed into the swallowing tube (esophagus). A long probe approximately the width of an index finger is passed into the mouth and subsequently the swallowing tube (esophagus). Because the heart sits immediately in front of the swallowing tube, superior images are obtained.

You should present to the testing area **one hour** prior to your scheduled time to allow for registration, preparation. The entire exam takes about **an hour** to complete. However it takes another hour or so for the sedative to wear off before you can leave. You should wait a couple of hours before attempting to eat. You will need to bring someone with you who can drive you home after the test is complete. You are not allowed by law to operate any machinery after the injection of a sedative for at least **10-12 hours**. You may have a sore throat for a few days after. Rarely your saliva may be blood-tinged due to irritation of the lining of the swallowing tube (esophagus) with the probe. Even rarer is the risk of perforation to the swallowing tube (esophagus).

If there are any abnormalities identified during the exam, your doctor will discuss your options with you. A lot of times patients do not remember the results of the test due to sedation. In this case, you should call your physician the following day. An abnormal exam may lead to heart catheterization, changes/addition of medications, and possibly surgery.