

About Your Echocardiogram Study (Echo)



IH-III-29
R.D. 11/03
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Cardiovascular Services

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram (echo) study is a simple, safe test that will help your doctor find out if you have a problem with your heart and, if you do, how to treat the problem.

An echo is also called a sonogram and uses ultrasound to look at your heart. Ultrasound is sound waves that are too high-pitched to be heard or felt. The ultrasound machine sends the sound waves toward your heart. The sound waves then bounce back from your heart. The ultrasound machine records these and makes a moving picture of how your heart is working.

A specially trained technician will do the echo. The room must be dimly lit in order for the technician to see the monitor.



Will I be asleep during the study?

No, you will not be asleep during the study. No medicines or IV's will be used for a routine echo.

What will happen to me during the echo?

- You will need to take off your clothes from the waist up, put on a hospital gown and lie down on a stretcher on your back.
- Electrodes (they look like round stickers) with wires will be put on your chest to record your heart beat during the study.
- The technician will put a gel (jelly-like substance) on your chest. You will then be asked to roll onto your left side.
- The technician will place a transducer over the gel and scan your heart at several places on your chest. The transducer is used to send and receive the ultrasound waves.

When the technician places the transducer on your chest, it must be pressed down firmly to get a good picture of your heart at work. The pressure applied does cause discomfort in some people. Be sure to tell the technician if you have chest soreness.

(over)

How long will the test take?

The actual test last anywhere from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

What happens after the test?

You can go back to your usual activities when the test is over. If you are a patient in the hospital, you will go back to your room and continue the activities that your doctor has said are OK.

When do I get the results?

- A Cardiologist (heart doctor) will check your test and send the results to your doctor.
- If you are a clinic patient, your doctor will tell you the results at your next visit.