
Patient Information Sheet – Transesophageal Echocardiography

This sheet will offer a brief explanation and discussion of the test you are asked to undergo called transesophageal echocardiography or T.E.E. If you have any questions or if any aspect of the test is unclear, please feel free to ask for further explanation before we begin.

1. What is the name of the test?
 1. Transesophageal echocardiography.
2. What does the test involve?
 2. Visualization of the heart using a flexible fiberoptic endoscopic echocardiography probe. This scope is passed through the mouth and into the esophagus (food pipe) halfway to the stomach.
3. Equipment:
 3. The flexible endoscope is a remarkable piece of equipment that can image (or show a picture) of your heart to your doctor when it is positioned in the esophagus and aimed towards the heart. It will show the heart, the heart valves, the heart size, and its pumping action.
4. Reasons for this type of exam?
 4. Certain factors such as chronic lung disease (where the patient may have excess air between the probe and the heart), barrel chest build, and obesity can interfere with standard imaging from outside the chest on the chest wall. In addition, certain medical conditions (such as artificial valves) can make having the probe closer to the heart very desirable.
5. Preparation:
 5. The only step you need to take this test is to refrain from eating and drinking for eight hours prior to the examination.
6. Procedure:
 6. The test can be performed on an in- or out-patient basis. Your throat is anesthetized with a spray or solution and you are mildly sedated. The endoscope is then gently inserted into the upper esophagus. You can breathe easily throughout the exam.
7. Results:
 7. After the exam, your physician will explain the results to you and your family. Your physician will advise you when to see him again.
8. Side Effects and risks:
 8. A temporary mild sore throat sometimes occurs after the exam. Serious risks are uncommon. In rare instances, a perforation, or tear in the esophagus wall can occur. These complications may require hospitalization and rarely surgery. Due to the mild sedation, you should not drive or operate machinery following the exam. For this reason, a driver should accompany you for the exam.
9. Medications:
 9. Notify your physician of medications you are on before the test and he/she will determine which ones to take and which medications to hold.