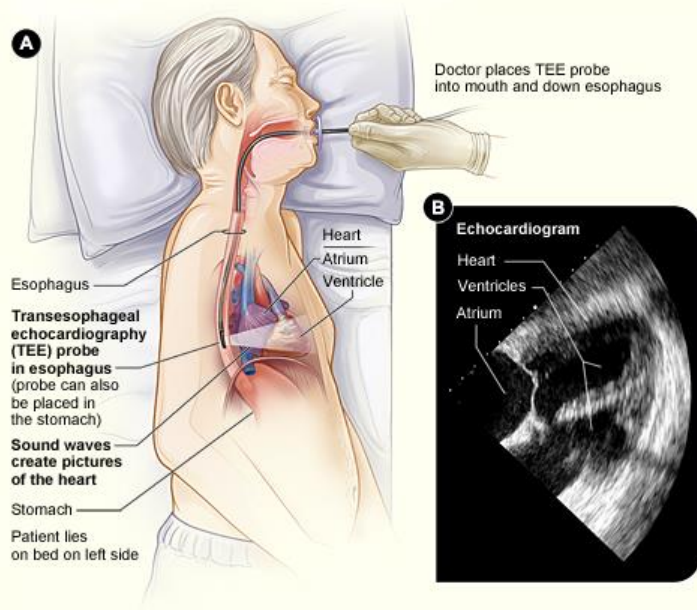


Trans-Esophageal Echocardiogram (TEE): About This Test



What is a transesophageal echocardiogram?

A transesophageal echocardiogram is a test to help your doctor look at the inside of your heart. A small device called a transducer directs sound waves toward your heart. The sound waves make a picture of the heart's valves and chambers.

Your doctor may do this test to look for certain types of heart disease. Or it may be done to see how disease is affecting your heart.

You will be given medicine to make you sleepy and comfortable during the test.

The doctor puts a small, flexible tube into your throat and guides it to the esophagus. This is the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach. The doctor will ask you to swallow as the tube goes down.

The transducer is at the tip of the tube. It gets close to your heart to make clear pictures. The doctor will look at the ultrasound pictures on a screen.

You will not be able to eat or drink until the numbness from the throat spray wears off. Your throat may be sore for a few days after the test.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

What happens before the procedure?

Preparing for the procedure

- Understand exactly what procedure is planned, along with the risks, benefits, and other options.
- Tell your doctors ALL the medicines, vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies you take. Some of these can increase the risk of bleeding or interact with anesthesia.
- If you take blood thinners, such as warfarin (Coumadin), Eliquis, Xarelto, Pradaxa, clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to talk to your doctor. He or she will tell you if you should stop taking these medicines before your procedure. Make sure that you understand exactly what your doctor wants you to do.

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- Your doctor will tell you which medicines to take or stop before your procedure. You may need to stop taking certain medicines a week or more before the procedure. So talk to your doctor as soon as you can.
- If you have an advance directive, let your doctor know. It may include a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care. Bring a copy to the hospital. If you don't have one, you may want to prepare one. It lets your doctor and loved ones know your health care wishes. Doctors advise that everyone prepare these papers before any type of surgery or procedure.
- Be sure to tell your doctor about any problems you have with your stomach or esophagus.

Procedures can be stressful. This information will help you understand what you can expect. And it will help you safely prepare for your procedure.

What happens on the day of the procedure?

- Follow the instructions exactly about when to stop eating and drinking. If you don't, your procedure may be canceled. If your doctor told you to take your medicines on the day of the procedure, take them with only a sip of water.
- Take a bath or shower before you come in for your procedure. Do not apply lotions, perfumes, deodorants, or nail polish.
- Take off all jewelry and piercings. And take out contact lenses, if you wear them.

At the hospital or surgery center

- You will be kept comfortable and safe by your anesthesia provider. You may get medicine that relaxes you or puts you in a light sleep. The area being worked on will be numb.
- You will get some medicine sprayed in your throat. This will numb your throat to prevent you from gagging when the transducer is moved into your esophagus.
- You will lie on your left side on an exam table. You may get a mouth guard to protect your teeth.
- After the procedure, you will be monitored for about 2 hours.

Going home

- Be sure you have someone to drive you home. Anesthesia and pain medicine make it unsafe for you to drive.
- You will be given more specific instructions about recovering from your procedure. They will cover things like diet, wound care, follow-up care, driving, and getting back to your normal routine.

When should you call your doctor?

- You have questions or concerns.
- You don't understand how to prepare for your procedure.
- You become ill before the procedure (such as fever, flu, or a cold).
- You need to reschedule or have changed your mind about having the procedure.