

# Transesophageal Echocardiography (TEE)

## What is a Transesophageal Echocardiogram?

A Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) is a test in which a small transducer attached to the end of a flexible tube is used to record images of your heart. This tube will be passed into your mouth and down your esophagus (food pipe) until it sits behind your heart. This technique allows the doctor to assess the structure and function of your heart in more detail without interference from the ribs and lungs. A TEE is often ordered when the results from a standard echocardiogram are insufficient, or when your doctor wants to take a closer look at your heart.

## Getting Ready

- You will be reminded of your appointment by phone the day before your scheduled test.
- You will need to begin **fasting eight hours** before the test, which includes **nothing to eat or drink**.
- Do not take your medications unless your doctor instructs you to.
- Please bring along a list of your current medications.
- During the test you will be sedated so you will need to arrange for someone to drive you home afterward.
- You will not be able to drive a motorized vehicle for 24 hours following the test as the sedation can affect your driving.
- Please notify your nurse before the test if you have any loose teeth or if you have partial or full dentures.

## Arriving at the Hospital

You will need to arrive to **Patient Registration** located on the **first floor** of the hospital no later than **6:00 am**. Here you will take a number and complete the registration process. The registration clerk will then direct you to Day Surgery located on the **third floor** of the hospital. A nurse will bring you in and prep you for your procedure.

## During the TEE Procedure

- When you arrive, you will be taken to a patient bay and asked to change into a gown.
- You will have an intravenous (IV) started in your arm.
- A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm in order to monitor your blood pressure.
- A small clip, attached to a pulse oximeter, will be placed on your finger to monitor the oxygen level of your blood.

- The cardiac sonographer will place three electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) on your chest.
- Before the test begins, your throat will be sprayed with an anaesthetic to freeze it. You will then be asked to turn onto your left side.
- You will be given IV sedation to help make you comfortable.
- The doctor will gently insert the TEE probe into your mouth. You will be asked to swallow the probe as it is slowly guided into your esophagus. The probe is lubricated to help it slide easily.
- You may feel the doctor moving the probe, but it should not hurt or interfere with your breathing. Your heart rate, blood pressure and breathing will be monitored throughout the test.
- The TEE probe will be in the esophagus for approximately 20 to 30 minutes.
- After the procedure is over, recovery will take one to two hours depending on the effect of the sedation.
- The total length of time in the hospital will be approximately two to three hours before being discharged home.

## Will I Feel Any Discomfort?

Your care providers will do their best to keep you as comfortable as possible. If you feel any discomfort, please let your nurse or doctor know and they will adjust your medication to make the procedure as easy as possible. The probe insertion might be uncomfortable, but that lasts for only seconds.

## After the TEE Procedure

- You will be under observation for one to two hours and your vital signs will be monitored closely.
- You may have some difficulty swallowing right after the test. This will go away in a few hours.
- You can eat and drink again when your throat is no longer numb and your gag reflex recovers. This will be approximately one to two hours after the procedure.
- You should avoid eating salad for the first meal after the test as the lettuce may become stuck in your throat.
- It is common to have a sore throat for a day or two after the test.
- Following the procedure and upon recovering you will be handed a Post-Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) Patient Information sheet with discharge instructions. Be sure to follow these instructions.
- You will need to have someone drive you home.
- Do not drive a motorized vehicle for the next 24 hours as the sedation may affect your ability to drive.
- Do not drink alcohol for the next 24 hours.
- If you have any problems/concerns, please go to the nearest Emergency Department for examination.

## How Will I Know the Results of the Test?

After the Cardiologist reviews the test, your referring doctor will receive a detailed report. You can contact your doctor to discuss the results with them.

If you have questions or concerns, you can reach the Cardiology department at 519-464-4400 Ext. 5282.