

Echocardiogram

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound outlining your hearts movement and pumping action with use of a hand-held device that takes pictures of your heart's valves and chambers. An echo is combined with doppler ultrasound to evaluate the blood flow through the hearts valves.

Why is an Echocardiogram performed?

An echocardiogram is used to assess the overall function of your heart. It can determine the presence or progression of heart and valve disease, which in turn can help direct and evaluate the effectiveness of your medical or surgical treatment plans.

How do I prepare for an echocardiogram?

There are no restrictions prior to testing.

Take all of your medications at the usual times, as prescribed by your doctor.

Wear comfortable clothing. You will be asked to remove clothing from the waist up and will be provided with a gown.

What happens during an echocardiogram?

The procedure will be explained to you in detail by the cardiac sonographer in a private room.

A cardiac sonographer will place three electrodes on your chest that attaches to the EKG monitor to visualize your heart's electrical activity during the test.

In order to obtain the pictures of your heart, you will lie on your left side on a flat exam table. You may be asked to change positions several times during the exam to gain necessary views. At times you may be asked to hold your breath to get clearer images.

The sonographer will place an ultrasound transducer on several areas of your chest with a small amount of gel that helps produce clearer pictures.

You should not feel any major discomfort, just a slight pressure from the ultrasound transducer on different areas of the chest.

How long does an echocardiogram take?

The appointment will take about 45-60 minutes.

How will my results be communicated?

After the cardiologist has reviewed and interpreted your images, a report will be sent to the ordering physician. Your physician will explain the meaning of your test results with you

and next steps for your treatment and care plan. A referral to a Cardiologist may be necessary.

How can I get a copy of my results?

Imaging reports can be made available for you to keep or share with other physicians. Please allow 24 hours for record requests. Contact the Cardiology department for all cardiac record requests 540-368-5384. Records can be picked up at the Cardiology department.