



## WHAT IS ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY?

Echocardiography (ek-o-kar-dee-AH-gruh-fee), also called an echo test, is a test that takes “moving pictures” of the heart with sound waves. You don’t have to stay in the hospital; it’s not surgery and doesn’t hurt. This test is done to help your doctor find out if you have problems with your heart or with how it’s working.

## WHY IS THE TEST NEEDED?

- Suspected heart murmur
- Suspected heart attack
- Unexplained chest pains
- History of Rheumatic fever
- Congenital heart defects
- Suspected swelling of tissue near heart

## HOW IS IT DONE?

- You’ll lie on a special bed on you side or back.
- You are awake and can watch during the test.
- A technician will put special gel on a probe an move it over your chest area.
- The test usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes.
- Ultra-high-frequency sound waves will pick up reflected images of your heart and valves.
- It can take longer if the doctor wants additional special information.
- No X-Rays are used. You cannot hear the sound waves.
- There is no pain. There are no side-effects.
- A videotape and photographs of the images are made for the Cardiologist’s review.
- There is no discomfort, except for the chill of the gel and the need to lay in one position for a period of time.

## WHAT WILL THE TEST SHOW?

- The size and shape of your heart
- If a wall or section of heart muscle is weak and not working correctly
- If you have a problem with your heart’s valves
- How well your heart is “pumping”
- If you have a blood clot

## IS THERE A RISK?

There is no known risk from this test.

## HOW SHOULD I PREPARE?

- You do not need to take any special medicines before your test.
- You should take your usual medications.
- Please bring all of the medicines you regularly take so the Nurse can be sure what you are using.