Transesophageal Echocardiogram

TEE
For stroke evaluation

A TEE is a type of study. It uses sound waves to make an image of the heart. A small device is placed right behind the heart, in the esophagus. Since the sound waves are nearer to the heart, it allows clearer pictures of the heart’s movement.

How does it work?

The doctor gently places a flexible tube into your mouth and down your esophagus (the same tube that food goes down). Your throat is numbed and you will have sedation medications to make you drowsy, so you should feel little or no discomfort.
As you swallow, the probe is guided further down.
Although you may gag as the probe is inserted, most people do not feel pain. Once the probe is in place behind the heart, the doctor can move the probe up, down, and sideways to view the heart from a range of angles.

Getting ready for your TEE

- Do not eat or drink for 8 hours. Your stomach needs to be empty for a TEE. If you have diabetes, discuss your plans with a doctor, since going without food may mean that you need to change your other medicines.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home from the hospital. You may not drive yourself.
- Tell your doctor if you have any problems with your throat (swallow), stomach, or esophagus. (for example, esophageal varices or past surgery)
Before a TEE, your doctor will tell you about the test and its risks and benefits, and you will be asked to sign a consent form.
### Risks vs. Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<td>Although the risk is small, the following complications can occur:</td>
<td>• Much clearer images than a standard echocardiogram</td>
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<td>• May lead to a more accurate diagnosis and treatment plan</td>
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<td>• Abnormal heart rhythms</td>
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<td>• Breathing problems</td>
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<td>• Reaction to medicines</td>
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<td>• Bleeding</td>
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<td>• Puncture of the esophagus</td>
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### What to expect during your TEE if you are coming from home

When you arrive, you will change into a hospital gown. An IV (intravenous tube) will be placed into a vein in your arm. If you wear dentures, they will be removed.

You will be asked to lie on your left side. Your throat will be sprayed with a numbing medicine (anesthetic). You will also receive medicine through your IV to help you relax.

### Bubble study with the TEE

A bubble study may be done during a TEE. It allows doctors to learn more about how blood flows through your heart and your risk for stroke. For the study, a small amount of air is injected into the IV. You will not feel any different. You will be asked to “bear down” as if having a bowel movement (without emptying bowels) during the test. The tech will let you know when and how to do this. Not every echo includes a bubble study.

Though the TEE exam only takes 15-20 minutes, you will be watched after the exam. The staff will let you know when it’s okay to go. You can expect your entire appointment to last 2 hours.
After Your TEE

- Do not eat or drink until your throat is no longer numb (about 1 hour).
- Your throat may be sore. After the first hour, soothe it with cold drinks and lozenges.
- Due to a side effect of the medicine, you may not remember the test.
- You should not drive or make important personal or business decisions until the next day.

When to Call Your Doctor

- Trouble swallowing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Bleeding
- Fever

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, call your doctor or the UW Health Emergency Room at 608-262-2398.

Results

The doctor doing the TEE should be able to give you preliminary results before you leave. Your doctor will receive a written report and talk with you about the final results.