



Echocardiography (“Echo”) is the technique of visualising the heart with high frequency sound waves through a hand-held transducer (ultrasound).

Why does my doctor want me to have this test?

The procedure may be used to look for abnormalities of the heart muscle, valves or the main blood vessels. It may be ordered if there is suspicion of an enlarged or weakened heart. An Echo can detect the cause of a heart murmur.

How do I prepare for the test?

The procedure takes approximately 45 minutes, and requires you to remove the clothes from your upper body. A gown will be provided for your comfort. After electrode dots are placed on your skin, you will be asked to lie down on the examination bench. The hand-held transducer will be applied to the chest wall with ultrasound gel. The images of your heart will be displayed on the monitor, and the sound of the blood flow may be heard.

Is it dangerous?

There is no danger associated with the test, but sometimes the transducer may be uncomfortable, which you should report to the sonographer at the time. No X-Rays are used, and it is similar to foetal ultrasound performed during pregnancy. The procedure does not impair your ability to drive.

What happens after the test?

The results of the Echo are usually available to your Doctor within 24 hours. Urgent problems will be communicated directly by telephone.