

TESTfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

What is a Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

Your doctor has suggested you have a Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) as part of your evaluation at National Jewish Health. A Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) is an ultrasound of your heart. During a TEE an ultrasound probe is placed through your mouth into your esophagus. The ultrasound shows the structures and functions of the heart muscle and heart valves from different angles. It does this by using sound waves.

Why use this type of Echocardiogram?

Many factors, such as body size and shape, make it difficult at times to get clear images during a traditional Echocardiogram. The Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) allows your doctor to get better ultrasound images than a traditional Echocardiogram because the probe is much closer to the heart.

How do you get ready for the test?

Before the test, your doctor will explain the procedure in detail, including possible complications and side effects. They will be available to answer any questions you may have.

- ✓ Do not eat food or drink liquids for at least 6 hours before the test.
- ✓ If you are diabetic please bring your glucometer and medicine, including insulin.
- ✓ Please arrive 30 minutes before your test is scheduled.
- ✓ Wear clothing you can remove from the waist up. You will be given a gown to wear.
- ✓ Ask a companion (family member or friend) to pick you up after your TEE and take you home. You will not be able to drive or take a taxi home after the test because of the medicine you will be given to make you drowsy.

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Where do I go to get this test done?

Check in at the main desk and they will direct you to the Minimally Invasive Diagnostic Center (MIDC) waiting area.

What is done during the test?

When you arrive the nurse will explain what will be done before, during and after the test. If you have any questions, please ask. You will be given a hospital gown to wear. An intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand so medicine can be delivered when needed.

The nurse will connect you to several monitors:

- **Electrocardiogram (ECG):** Three electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) will be placed on your chest. The electrodes are attached to an electrocardiograph monitor (ECG) that charts your heart's electrical activity.
- **Blood pressure monitor:** A blood pressure cuff will be placed on your arm to monitor your blood pressure often throughout the test.
- **Oximeter:** A small clip is placed on your finger. The device monitors the oxygen level of your blood.

You will have your throat sprayed with an anesthetic (pain-relieving medicine).

You will be given medicine in your IV to help you relax and feel comfortable as possible during the test. You may feel drowsy. If you feel discomfort at any time during the test, tell your doctor, nurse, or sonographer. You will be asked to lie on your left side on an exam table.

A dental suction tip will be placed in your mouth to remove any secretions.

The doctor will insert a thin, lubricated endoscope into your mouth and down your throat (this part lasts a few seconds and might be a little uncomfortable) into your esophagus. The tube does not interfere with your breathing. You may be asked to swallow at certain times to help pass the tube.

Once the probe is in position, pictures of the heart are obtained at various angles (you will not feel this part of the test). Because of the medicine (sedative), you may not be entirely awake for the test. Your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen level of your blood will be closely monitored during and immediately after the test.

What should you do after the test?

You will be given instructions as to when you can resume your normal activities.

Typically patients are eating, drinking, and resuming normal activities within 30 to 60 minutes. Remember to have someone pick you up after your TEE and take you home.

How long will the test take?

The total time is 2 hours for prep, testing, and recovery. The testing typically takes 10 to 15 minutes to get all of the ultrasound images.

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