Echocardiogram (ECHO)

Your caregiver has requested that you have an echocardiogram. This is a test which produces images of the heart by using sound waves. The echocardiogram is simple, painless, obtained within a short period of time and offers valuable information to your caregiver. The images from an echocardiogram can provide cardiac information such as:

- Heart size.
- Heart muscle function.
- Heart valve function.
- Aneurysm detection.
- Evidence of a past heart attack.
- Fluid buildup around the heart.
- Heart muscle thickening.
- Assess heart valve function after heart valve surgery.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

You should be present one hour prior to your procedure unless otherwise directed by your caregiver. Check in at the admissions desk to fill out any necessary paperwork.

PROCEDURE

- No special preparation is needed. Dress and eat normally.
- The echocardiogram test normally takes less than an hour to do.
- You will need to remove the clothes from your waist up.
- A small hand held device about the size of a microphone is lubricated with gel and placed at various areas on your chest. The gel helps transmit the sound waves from the hand held device. The sound waves harmlessly bounce off your heart to allow the heart images to be captured in "real time" motion. These images are then recorded on video tape and stored on a computer so your cardiologist (specialized heart doctor) can interpret the echocardiogram.

RESULTS

- Echocardiogram results are usually available the same day you had your test. **Ask your caregiver how to obtain your echocardiogram results. It is your responsibility to follow up on obtaining the results.**

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