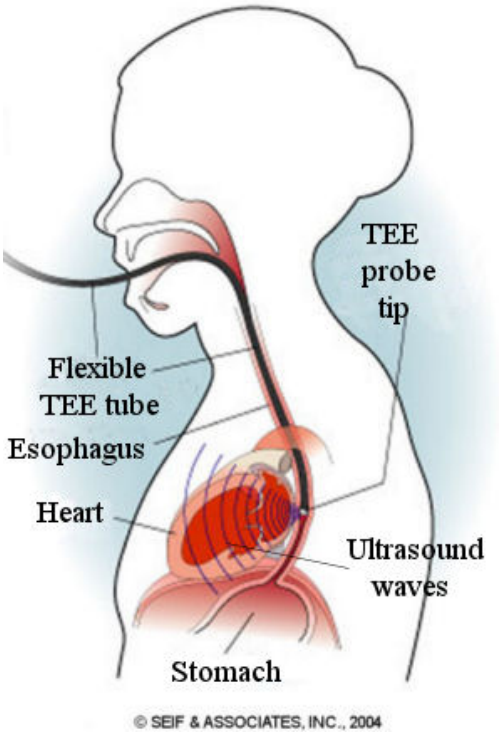
Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) is a special type of echocardiogram (*test that produces images of the heart by sound waves*). This type of echocardiogram can obtain better images of the heart than a standard echocardiogram. A TEE is done by passing a flexible tube down the throat (*esophagus*). The heart is located in front of the esophagus. Because the heart and esophagus are close to one another, your caregiver can take very clear, detailed pictures of the heart via ultrasound waves.



WHY HAVE A TEE?

Your caregiver may need more information based on your medical condition. A TEE is usually performed due to the following:

- Your caregiver needs more information based on standard echocardiogram findings.
- If you had a stroke, this might have happened because a clot formed in your heart. A TEE can visualize different areas of the heart and check for clots.
- To check valve anatomy and function. Your caregiver will especially look at the mitral valve.
- To check for swelling (*inflammation*) on the inside lining of the heart (*endocarditis*).
- To evaluate the dividing wall (*septum*) of the heart and presence of a hole that did not close after birth (*patent foramen ovale, PFO*).
- To help diagnose a tear in the wall of the aorta (*aortic dissection*).
- During cardiac valve surgery, a TEE probe is placed. This allows the surgeon to assess the valve repair before closing the chest.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

- Arrive at least 1 hour before the procedure or as told by your caregiver. You will need to sign a consent form for the TEE procedure.
- **Do not** eat or drink for 6 hours before the procedure or as told by your caregiver.
- An IV (*intravenous*) access will be started in the arm.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT:

- Swallowing difficulties.
- An esophageal obstruction.
- Use of aspirin or antiplatelet therapy.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

Though extremely rare, an esophageal tear (*rupture*) is a potential complication of a TEE.

PROCEDURE

- Sedation will be given through the IV to keep you or your child relaxed during the TEE.
- A local anesthetic may be sprayed to the back of the throat to help numb it.
- The vital signs, such as blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing, will be monitored during the procedure.
- The TEE probe is a long, flexible tube. It is about the width of an adult male's index finger. The tip of the probe is placed into the back of the mouth and you or your child will be asked to swallow. This helps to pass the tip of the probe into the esophagus. Once the tip of the probe is in the correct area, your caregiver can take pictures of the heart.
- A TEE is usually not a painful procedure. You may feel the probe press against the back of the throat. The probe does not enter the windpipe (*trachea*) and does not affect your breathing.

- Your time spent at the hospital is usually less than 2 hours.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- You or your child will be taken to a recovery room area so the sedation can wear off. You will go home when you or your child is fully awake and able to swallow liquids.
- The throat may be sore and scratchy after the TEE. This normally goes away in 24 hours.
- You must arrange for someone to take you home. **Do not** drive for the rest of the day.

FINDING OUT THE RESULTS OF YOUR TEST

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is chest pain.
- You or your child has a hard time breathing or has shortness of breath.
- You or your child coughs up or vomits blood.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch this condition.
- Will get help right away if you or your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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