

Transthoracic Echocardiogram (TTE)

What is a Transthoracic Echocardiogram?

A Transthoracic Echocardiogram (TTE) is a test that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to create images (scans) of your heart. It is used to help doctors see the four chambers of your heart, as well as the four heart valves and nearby blood vessels.

A transthoracic echocardiogram is the most common type of echocardiogram.

Why would I need a Transthoracic Echocardiogram?

A TTE provides information about the structure and function of your heart. It can help assess heart health before or after diagnosis and treatment, identify the cause of certain symptoms, and screen or diagnose possible medical conditions.

Your doctor may order a TTE if they want to:

- Check the structure and function of your heart valves.
- Determine how well your heart is pumping blood.
- Measure blood pressures and how blood is flowing through your valves
- Measure the size and shape of your heart's chambers.

What happens during a Transthoracic Echocardiogram?

During an echocardiogram you will have to lie on your left-hand side for approximately 40 minutes with your chest exposed. A sonographer will attach ECG electrodes to your chest to monitor your heart rate and rhythm. They will then use a transducer (probe) and move it over the chest wall to view your heart from different angles and take images.

You may be asked to either hold your breath or take a few deep breaths at several stages throughout the test to improve the image quality.

How do I prepare for a Transthoracic Echocardiogram?

There are no specific preparations required for the test. Wearing comfortable clothes that can be easily removed.

What are the risks with a Transthoracic Echocardiogram?

A TTE is completely safe. It will not interfere with any electronic devices.

