
Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

What is a Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

Your doctor has suggested you have a TEE as part of your evaluation at National Jewish Health. A TEE is an ultrasound of your heart that allows your doctor to get better ultrasound images than they could obtain from a traditional echocardiogram.

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. This exam gives an improved view of some of the heart structures to evaluate heart valves, clots, shunts, etc.

Preparing for Your TEE

- **Stop eating food 8 hours before your procedure. You may still sip *clear* liquids (only) until 4 hours before your procedure. Stop drinking fluids of any kind 4 hours before your procedure. If you do not follow these instructions, your procedure will be cancelled.**
- **Notify** your doctor if you take blood thinners such as Coumadin (warfarin), Eliquis (apixapan), Xarelto (rivaroxaban), Lovenox (enoxaparin), Pradaxa (dabigatran), etc., to clarify if you should take these the morning of the procedure. For patients scheduled for cardioversion however you likely need to take them the morning of the procedure.
- **Notify** your doctor if you take any oral medicines or insulin for diabetes.

On Procedure Day

- **A responsible adult must wait for you at National Jewish during your procedure, and take you back to your residence after you are discharged. You will not be able to drive yourself or take a taxi/public transportation. If you do not have someone with you to drive you home, your procedure will be cancelled.**
- Check in at the Front Desk, and they will direct you from there. If you have questions, or if you would like to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please call 303-398-1355.
- **Do not** take the medicines your doctor has asked you to hold.
- **Do** take any heart, blood pressure or seizure medicine, with a few sips of water, at least 2 hours before leaving for the test.

- **Do** bring your inhaled medicine with you. If you have sleep apnea, bring your CPAP mask and machine with you.
- **If you are diabetic**, please bring your glucose meter, test strips, and a source of fast-acting glucose with you (such as glucose tablets or glucose gel).
- If you have any loose teeth, trouble swallowing or history of esophagus or stomach procedures including chest or throat radiation please let your doctor know.
- If you have limited neck mobility or range of motion please tell your doctor.
- **If you use oxygen at home**, even if only at night or while active, please bring a portable oxygen unit with you. You may need to use the oxygen for a while after the procedure. The day of the test:
 - You should not work, drive, or make any important decisions for the rest of the day.
 - We suggest that someone stay with you overnight.

What is Done during the Procedure?

When you arrive the nurse will explain what will be done before, during and after the TEE. If you have any questions, please ask. The nurse will start an IV. You will lie down on your left side during this procedure. A mouthpiece will help you keep your mouth open. The doctor performing the procedure or an anesthesia provider will use your IV to sedate you. The doctor will insert a thin, lubricated ultrasound probe into your mouth, down your throat and into your esophagus. The probe does not interfere with your breathing. Once the probe is in position, the doctor will obtain pictures of the heart. The ultrasound uses sound waves to show the structures and functions of the heart muscle and heart valves from different angles. You will be monitored closely during the procedure. Once the TEE is complete, you will go to a recovery room to wake up. You will be sleepy in the beginning. Your care team will determine when you are able to go home. Your nurse will review your procedure report and discharge instructions with you, and send you home with a copy of each.

How Long will the Test Take?

Plan on being at National Jewish Health for 3 to 4 hours, although sometimes people stay longer.

Other Information

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

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