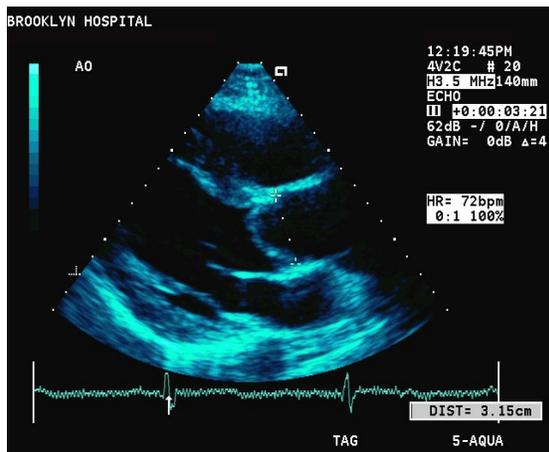


St. Luke's Heart Care Services Patient / Family Information

Echocardiogram (Ultrasound of the Heart)

What is an Echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound test of the heart. Sound waves are used to make a picture of your heart.



Why is an Echocardiogram performed?

An echocardiogram allows the doctor to see different parts of your heart and how well they are working. The doctor look at the valves of the heart, the size of the heart, and also how your heart moves with each beat.

Where is an Echocardiogram performed?

An echocardiogram can either be performed in a hospital or at your heart doctor's office. In a hospital the test is performed in a special procedure room located on the 4th floor of the Heart Center. If you are a patient in the hospital, the echocardiogram machine can be brought to the side of your bed and can be done without you having to get out of bed.

What should I wear for the test?

Wear a shirt or blouse that can be taken off easily. Females will be asked to remove their bras. The probe must have direct contact with your skin to make the pictures of your heart.

How long does the test take to complete?

The test will take about 45 to 60 minutes to complete.

What should you expect before the test?

There is nothing special that you need to do before the test.

What should you expect during the test?

The test is done by either a heart doctor or a specially trained sonographer. During the test you will be lying down on your left side. A special gel will be placed on the front of your chest and then the physician or sonographer will take a special probe and move it back and forth across your chest. This will make a picture of your heart that can be seen on a small TV screen.

Will I have any pain during or discomfort during the test?

This test does not usually cause pain, but there may be some discomfort. There may be some discomfort from the probe being moved around on your chest. The physician or sonographer may have to push the probe into your side to get clear pictures of your heart.

Are any medications used during the test?

For most people there are no medications used for the test. Sometimes the sonographer will want to use an image enhancing medication to help make better pictures for the heart doctor. An IV may have to be started if this special medication is needed.

What should you expect after the test?

The gel will be cleaned from your chest and there are generally no after effects from the test. If an image enhancing medication is used the sonographer or a nurse will talk with you regarding any possible side effects.

When will you know the results of your test?

The pictures of your heart will be reviewed by a heart doctor within 24-48 hours after the test. The results of the test will be sent to the doctor that ordered the test for you. The test results will also be sent to your family doctor. It may take 3 to 4 days before you know the results of your test. The sonographer that is doing your test will not give you the results of the test after he or she finishes taking the pictures.

Outpatient Instructions:

Please register at the Outpatient Registration Desk at the West Entrance **or** you may call (319) 369-8129 to pre-register with Centralized Scheduling, which will reduce your wait time at the registration desk.

Name: _____

Exam Date and Time: _____

Contact the St. Luke's Hospital Diagnostic Cardiology Department if you have further questions: 319-369-7400