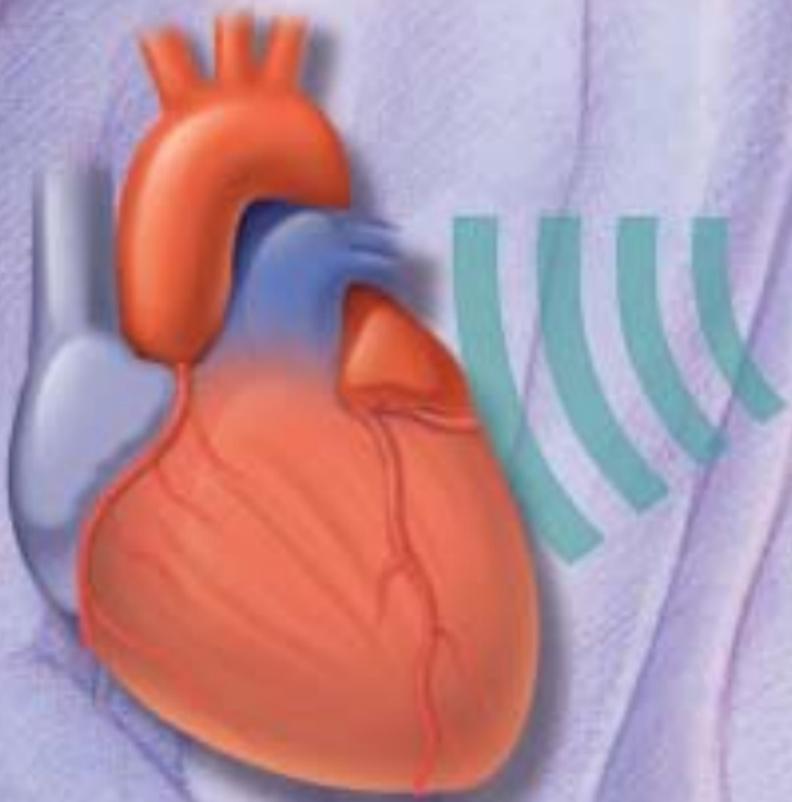


TRANSTHORACIC ECHO



Using Sound Waves
to Check Your Heart

What Is a Transthoracic Echo?

A transthoracic **echocardiogram** (echo) is an imaging test. It helps your doctor evaluate your heart.

This test:

- Is safe and painless.
- Can be done in a hospital, test center, or doctor's office.
- Bounces harmless sound waves (ultrasound) off the heart. A **transducer** (device that looks like a microphone) is used.
- Helps show the size of your heart. It also helps show the health of the heart's chambers and valves.



The transducer bounces sound waves off the heart. Because sound waves are high pitched, you won't hear them.

Before Your Echo

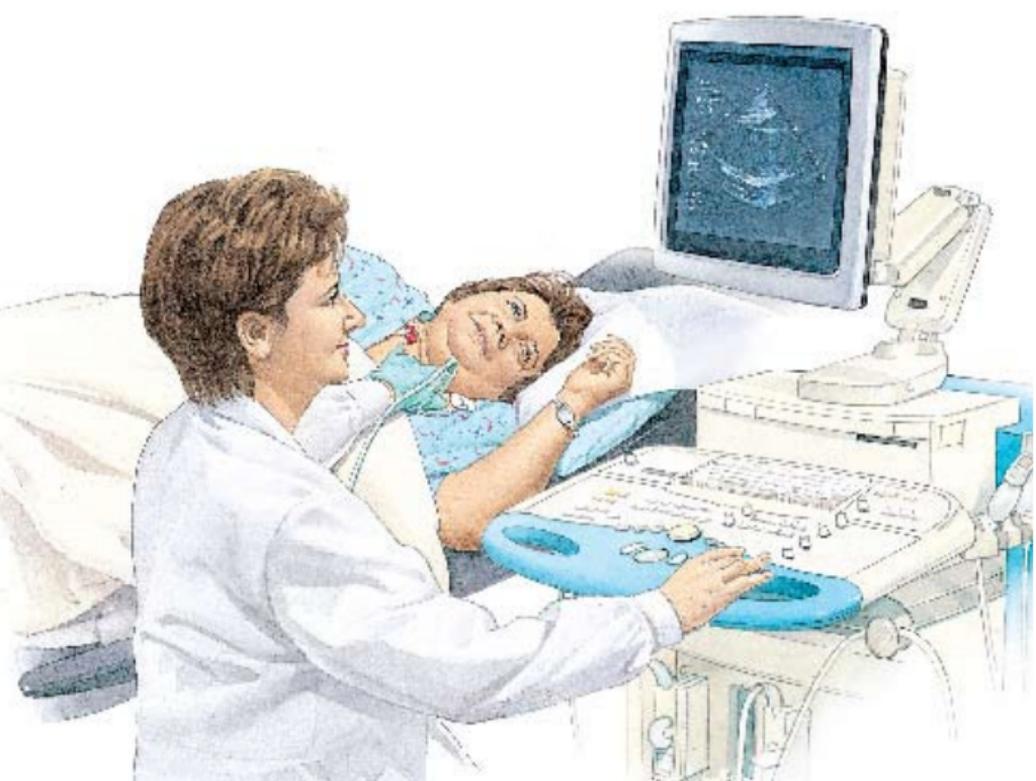
- Discuss any questions or concerns you have with your doctor.
- Mention any over-the-counter or prescription medications, herbs, or supplements you're taking.
- Allow extra time for checking in.
- Wear a two-piece outfit for the test. You may be asked to remove clothing and jewelry from the waist up. If so, you'll be given a short hospital gown.



You may need to undress from the waist up and put on a short gown.

During Your Echo

- Most echo tests take 30 to 45 minutes.
- Small pads (electrodes) are placed on your chest to monitor your heartbeat.
- A transducer coated with cool gel is moved firmly over your chest. This device creates the sound waves that make images of your heart.
- At times, you may be asked to exhale and hold your breath for a few seconds. Air in your lungs can affect the images.
- The transducer may also be used to do a Doppler study. This test measures the direction and speed of blood flowing through the heart. During the test, you may hear a “whooshing” sound. This is the sound of blood flowing through the heart.
- The images of your heart are stored electronically. This is so your doctor can review them later.



Images of your heart appear on a monitor.

After Your Echo

- Return to normal activity unless your healthcare provider tells you otherwise.
- Be sure to keep follow-up appointments.



Most people can return to normal activity as soon as the test is over.

Your Test Results

Your doctor will discuss your test results with you during a future office visit. The test results help the doctor plan your treatment and any other tests that are needed.



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