

# TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY (TEE)



A Closer Look  
at Your Heart

## What Is TEE?

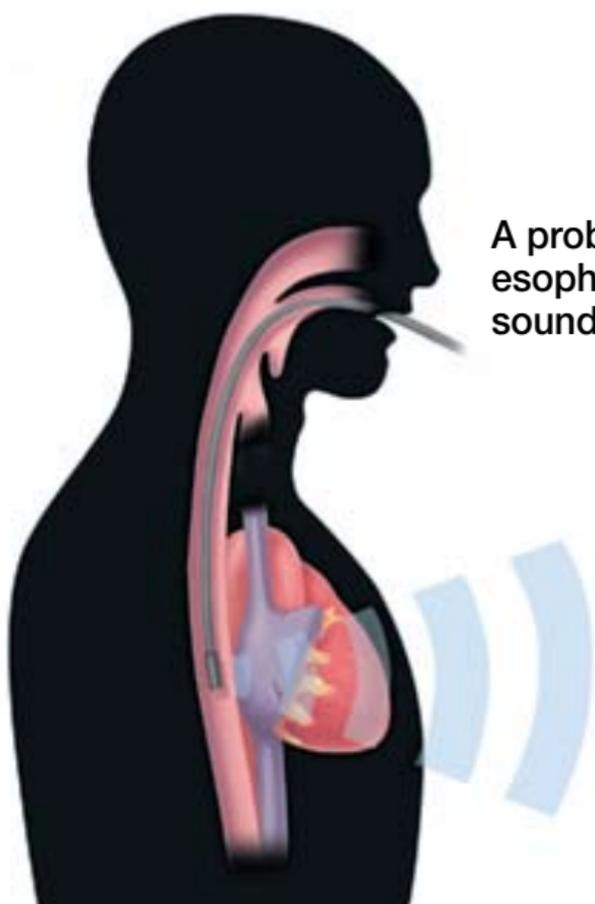
Transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) is a test that gives your doctor images of your heart. It is done from inside your esophagus (food pipe). Because the esophagus lies just behind the heart, TEE gives clearer pictures than standard echocardiography taken from outside the chest. During TEE, harmless sound waves bounce (echo) off your heart. These sound waves create images of your heart on a video screen. The images help your doctor identify problems such as heart infection or disease, or problems with your heart's walls or valves.

## Before Your TEE

- Tell your doctor if you take any medications or have ulcers, a hiatal hernia, or trouble swallowing.
- Tell your doctor if you have allergies to any medications or sedatives.
- Don't eat or drink for 8 hours before your exam. Take any prescribed medications with a sip of water only.
- Check with the doctor for arrival time. Allow plenty of time so you won't be late.
- Arrange to have an adult family member or friend pick you up after the exam. Don't plan to drive yourself home, as you may be drowsy.
- Allow 1 to 2 hours from your arrival to the time you can leave.

## How TEE Works

A flexible tube about the size of your index finger is inserted into your mouth and down your esophagus. At the tip of the tube is a small probe that produces sound waves. The sound waves bounce off your heart and are changed into pictures on a video screen. The doctor can move the probe up, down, and sideways to look at different parts of your heart from different angles. Your throat is numbed, so you should feel little or no discomfort during the procedure.



A probe in your esophagus sends sound waves.



Sound waves create images of your heart.

## During Your TEE

You may change into a hospital gown. You'll then go to the testing room. The test usually takes 10 to 30 minutes.

- If you wear dentures, you'll be asked to remove them. You'll be awake, but will be given medication through an IV line to help you relax. This is called conscious sedation. Your throat is sprayed with an anesthetic to numb it. You may also be given oxygen through a mask.
- You'll lie on your left side with your chin on your chest. A small plastic bite block will be put into your mouth to hold it open. The probe is then gently inserted through the bite block into your mouth. As you swallow, the tube is guided into your esophagus. The tube is lubricated to make it slide easily.
- You may feel the doctor moving the probe, but it shouldn't be painful or keep you from breathing. Your heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing will be monitored during the test.
- When the test is done, the probe and bite block are removed. You'll be watched until you're ready to go home.

## After Your Test

- Do not drive for 12 hours.
- Your throat will be numb for about 4 hours. Don't eat or drink during that time. Then start with small sips of water. If you can swallow the water easily, you can eat and drink normally.
- Your throat will be sore for a few hours.



## **Risks and Complications**

- Sore throat or problems swallowing (usually go away within 24 hours)
- Injury to the mouth or esophagus
- Abnormal heart rhythms

## **Call Your Doctor If You Have**

- Sore throat or trouble swallowing that lasts more than 24 hours
- Bleeding
- Internal pain
- Stiff neck

# Finding Out the Results

Because sound waves travel very fast, images of your heart are recorded almost instantly. In some cases, the doctor will discuss your test results with you before you leave. But the sedative given during the test may make it hard for you to remember what is said. So it is common for the doctor to make an appointment for another day to discuss the test results.



This product is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care.

©2010 The StayWell Company.  
www.krames.com 800-333-3032  
All rights reserved.

**KRAMES**  
PATIENT EDUCATION

*A MediMedia Company*

www.krames.com 800-333-3032