

Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

What is a TEE?

A Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) is a procedure that uses an ultrasound to create a moving picture of your heart which helps your doctor to see how you:

- Heart valves are functioning
- Heart muscle is moving
- Blood is flowing through the heart

Why Do I Need a TEE?

A TEE is used as a diagnostic test to check for any abnormalities in your heart, assisting your doctor to find the best course of treatment for any issues that are found.

Your doctor may use the TEE to check for **blood clots in your heart**. Blood clots in your heart have the potential to cause many serious medical problems, including stroke.

A TEE will sometimes be performed prior to a *cardioversion*.

- *Cardioversion* can dislodge blood clots in your heart, causing them to travel and cause serious medical issues.

How is a TEE Done?

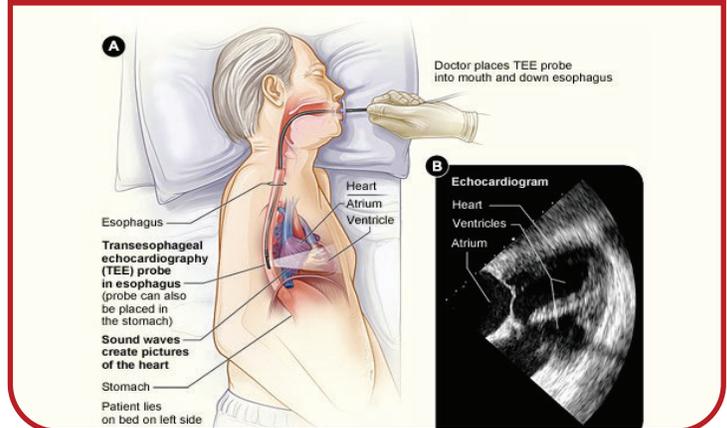
During TEE, a small ultrasound device is passed down your throat, through your esophagus, so it rests behind your heart.

Ultrasound imaging is used to take pictures of your heart while it is pumping.

If your TEE finds a clot in your heart, you will be prescribed **blood thinners** (*anticoagulants*) for several weeks until the blood clots have dissolved.

- If you had a *cardioversion* scheduled and a clot is found, your procedure will be rescheduled until after you take the blood thinners.
- If no blood clots are found, the cardioversion will be performed as scheduled.

During a TEE, a thin, flexible tube is passed down your throat. A transducer at the end of the tube uses high-frequency sound waves to take pictures of your heart.



What do I need to do next?

- **Talk with your doctor about the risks and benefits for this procedure. Be sure to ask all questions that you have.**
- **Take all medications as directed by your doctor.**

What Happens During a TEE?

- **You will be given a sedative to help you relax.** This will ensure you do not feel anything during the procedure.
- **You will also be given a throat spray, gel, or liquid to numb your throat. You will also be given a bite guard to protect your teeth.**
- The doctor will move a small, flexible tube down your throat and into your esophagus. You will need to swallow to help it go down. *You may gag a bit*, but this is normal. **It may help to remember that the tube is smaller than most bites of food.**
- The tube has a small ultrasound at the tip. Once positioned behind your heart, the doctors will take detailed pictures of your heart to **look for clots.**
- If your TEE finds a clot in your heart, you will be prescribed **blood thinners (anticoagulants)** for several weeks until the blood clots have dissolved.
 - If you had a *cardioversion* scheduled and a clot is found, your procedure will be rescheduled until after you take the blood thinners
 - If no blood clots are found, the cardioversion will be performed as scheduled

Contact your doctor if you experience the following:

- Persistent throat discomfort
- Coughing up blood
- Fever (100° F or above)
- Severe pain, redness or swelling.
- *Chest pain. If not relieved by medication, CALL 911.*

How do I Get Ready for this Procedure?

- **Take all prescribed anticoagulants (blood thinners) before your procedure.**
- **Inform your doctor of all medications that you are taking.** This includes *over-the-counter medications, inhalers, patches, vitamins, and herbal remedies.* Some of these medications can interfere with your blood thinners, please speak with your doctor before taking any new medications.
- **Follow all directions on when/if you need to stop eating or drinking prior to your procedure.** If you need water to take pills, please speak with your healthcare team for advise.
- **Arrange for a ride to and from SWCVA on the day of the procedure and plan to take the day off work or school.** Do not drive for the next 24 hours. Ask for someone to stay at home with you for the remainder of the day.

What Happens After Your Procedure?

After your procedure you may be moved to a recovery area, where you will wait until you are cleared to go home.

- *You may spend several hours in recovery for observation before going home.*

When you get home:

- **Rest and relax.** It is possible that you will feel weak and fatigued following the procedure due to the sedative given during the procedure. **Be careful** when walking or climbing stairs. Do not drive or operate heavy machinery, go to work, or make important decisions for the next 24 hours.
- **Take medications as prescribed by your doctor.** You may need to continue to take blood thinners or heart rhythm medication for several weeks or months following the procedure, *even if successful.*
- **Wait to eat or drink until the feeling comes back in your throat, usually after a couple of hours.** Start with liquids and soft foods such as gelatin, pudding, or soup. You might have a sore throat for the next couple of days. Gargling with water or using cough drops will aid in the discomfort.