

Echocardiograms

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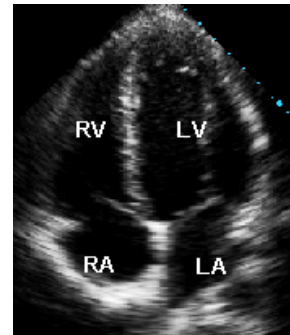
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An echocardiogram is a test that uses ultrasound waves to look at the heart. This test is effective, non-invasive, and accurate in detecting a variety of heart conditions.

Why should you have an Echocardiogram?

Echocardiograms assess for a variety of conditions including:

- The presence of heart failure by determining heart size, pumping strength, and the presence of any damaged heart muscle.
- Extent of damage done to the heart muscle if a heart attack has occurred.
- Presence of any valvular disease including the inability of the valves to open or close completely, leakage though the valve once it has closed, or any structural abnormalities associated with the valves.
- Detection of other problems including: congenital heart disease, pericarditis, pericardial effusion, and endocarditis.
- Detection of an aneurysm in the heart or in the aorta.



The Heart during an Echocardiogram

How is the test performed?



Patient having an Echocardiogram taken.

This test takes about 30 minutes to complete. The patient is brought to the ultrasound room and removes their clothing from their upper body. The patient is given a gown to wear and then sticky patches called electrodes are placed on their chest. These electrodes help to monitor the heart beat during the exam. The patient lays down onto the exam table and then a gel is placed on the chest to help the echo transducer get clearer pictures. The technologist uses the transducer to obtain the ultrasound of the heart. The technologist may ask the patient to move in various positions to get the best pictures. These pictures are recorded to videotape for the doctor to examine.

Exam Preparation

There is no preparation for this examination. The patient needs to simply show up at their scheduled time. This procedure is painless and involves no risks.

After the Echocardiogram

After the echocardiogram is completed, you can get dressed and go about your usual daily activities. The test is interpreted and reviewed by the physician within a few days. You will be scheduled for a follow up appointment to review these test results and discuss any questions you may have regarding this test.