

## ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

### WHAT IS IT?

Echocardiography, often called an 'echo', uses sound waves to produce an image of your heart. Your heart muscle, valves, large blood vessels and blood flow can be assessed in great detail. Echocardiography can also provide your Cardiologist with information about the blood pressures within the chambers of the heart and lungs.

### WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Echocardiography is not dangerous and is usually painless. The test does not involve radiation or X-rays. You do not need to specially prepare for an echocardiogram. During the test, you will lie on an examination bed. A technician will place small metal disks called electrodes on your chest.

These electrodes have wires which attach to the electrocardiogram machine. This machine monitors your heart rhythm during the test.

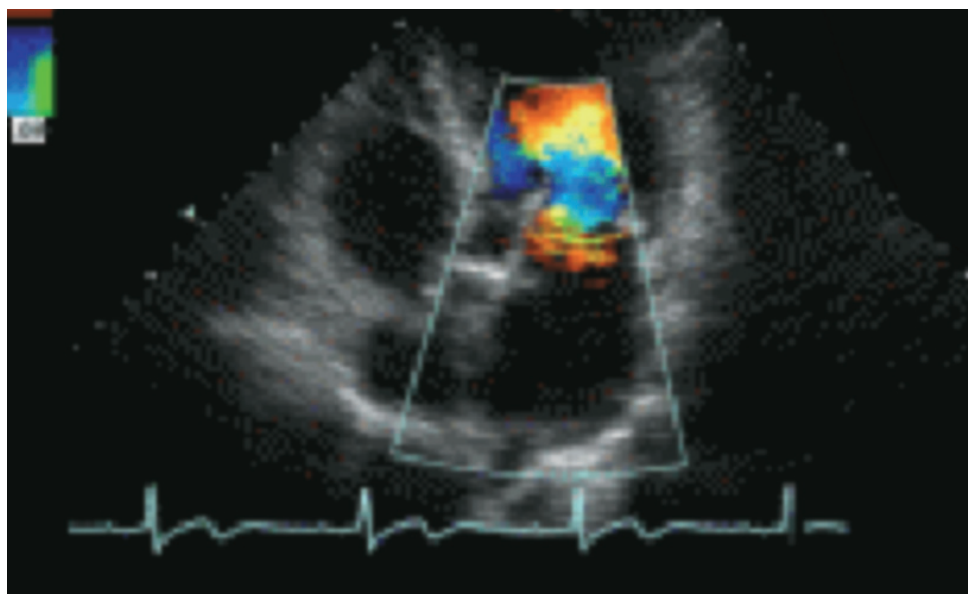
To image the heart, the technician will put a thick gel on your chest. The gel may feel cold but it does not harm your skin. Then, the technician will use the transducer to send and receive the sound waves. These sound waves are not audible.

The transducer will be placed directly on the left side of your chest, over your heart. The technician will press firmly as he or she moves the transducer across your chest and will ask you to briefly hold your breath during the test. For most of the test you will lie still.

An echocardiogram may take up to 45 minutes to perform. You should not feel pain or discomfort during the test. The results will be sent to your doctor generally on the same day.



- ▲ The probe which produces the silent sound waves is coated with gel to improve the quality of the pictures. This is placed against your chest.



- ▲ Example of an echocardiogram. Blood is seen flowing (coloured area) from one chamber of the heart to another.



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