

# What Is A Transesophageal Echo (TEE) ?

A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) is a test that doctors use to obtain images of the heart from inside the esophagus (swallowing tube). The esophagus lies immediately behind the heart and with this technology, very clear images of the heart can be obtained. This test is used by doctors to visualize structures of the heart not seen by a standard echocardiogram (from the outside chest wall) as well as clarify structures which may be otherwise poorly seen.

## How is The Transesophageal Echo Test Done?

This test is performed by inserting a long flexible probe, with an ultrasound transducer at its tip, through the mouth and into the esophagus just behind the heart. The transducer sends high frequency sound waves into the heart, which return as echoes. These echoes are converted into a real time image of the beating heart and blood flow through the chambers and valves. The images are displayed on a video monitor and are recorded on videotape or disk.

## The TEE Is A Valuable Test To Detect:

- Blood clots within the heart.
- Defects or holes between heart chambers.
- Severity of valve disease.
- Function of prosthetic (artificial) heart valves.
- Infection of the heart valves.
- Tears or blood clots in the aorta (The main artery leaving the heart).

## Preparation For The Test:

- **Do not eat or drink for 6-8 hours prior to the test.**
- Arrange to have someone drive you to the clinic or hospital and drive you home. Do not plan to drive yourself home, as you may be drowsy after the test.

## On The Day Of The Test At The Hospital Or Clinic:

- You will be given an explanation of the procedure, its benefits and possible risks
- You will be asked to sign a consent form. Feel free to ask any questions you may have concerning the test or the remaining part of the day.
- You will be asked to remove any dentures or dental prostheses as they may interfere with the test.
- External electrodes and a blood pressure cuff will be attached to you to monitor your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen content of the blood.
- An intravenous line will be inserted into an arm vein to administer medications.
- A small amount of supplemental oxygen will be administered to help with your breathing.
- Your throat will be sprayed with an anesthetic spray to numb it and you will be asked to lie on your left side while a sedative is administered to help you relax.

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## **On The Day Of The Test At The Hospital Or Clinic, (cont.)**

- The probe will be slowly passed through the mouth and into the esophagus. You may feel the probe being directed as needed but it is generally not painful.
- Once the probe is removed, you will be monitored for a short while until you are awake and able to swallow.
- The findings of the test are usually available immediately, however if you are still drowsy the findings may be discussed with you at a later time.



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# **HELENA CARDIOLOGY CLINIC**

## **TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHO**

### **A PATIENT'S GUIDE**

## **After The Test:**

- You will be given instructions as to what you should and should not do for the rest of the day.
- Do not drive or operate machinery for the remainder of the day.
- You must have someone drive