



# Transesophageal Echocardiogram

This handout will help you learn more about your Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE) at the Royal Jubilee Hospital; how to get ready, what to expect and what to watch for when you get home.

## **What is a Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)?**

A Transesophageal Echocardiogram or TEE is a special type of ultrasound that uses sound waves to take pictures of your heart. The pictures are taken from inside the esophagus (throat). This type of ultrasound gives a much clearer picture of some parts of the heart than a regular ultrasound.

## **Why is a TEE done?**

A TEE is done to help check your hearts condition related to:

- Any congenital or birth defects, heart valve disease, or heart muscle disease
- The function of an artificial valve
- Any blood clots in your heart
- Any infection in your heart
- Possible heart causes of stroke

## **Who will do the test?**

The test will be done by a cardiologist (heart doctor). Your family doctor will be sent a report within 2 weeks.

## **How long will the test take?**

TEE usually takes about 20-30 minutes

## How do I get ready for the test?

- Your doctor's office will give you instructions. Phone the office if you have not heard anything 2 days before the test or if you have any questions
- **Do not eat or drink anything after midnight, the night before your test**
- If you are diabetic, test your blood sugar level before coming to hospital. Tell the nurse your blood sugar level when you arrive
- Arrange for a responsible person to bring you to hospital, take you home (by car, taxi or bus), and stay with you overnight for at least the first night after the test. You cannot drive yourself or go home alone in a taxi or bus
- If you do not arrange to have a responsible person to take you home and to stay with you overnight, your test may be postponed until you are able to make these arrangements

## Coming to hospital

- Arrive at the Royal Jubilee Hospital at least 30 minutes before your appointment time
- Go thru the main entrance of the Diagnostic and Treatment Building. Check in at the admitting desk just inside the main doors
- After completing paperwork, you will go to the unit
- A nurse will get you ready for the test and tell you what to expect
- You will undress from the waist up and put on a hospital gown
- If you are diabetic, tell your nurse right away if you are having low blood sugar symptoms
- You will have an intravenous (IV) started. This will be used later to give you medication (sedation) to make you sleepy and relaxed for the test

- You will be taken to the Echocardiography Lab where the test will be done
- Visitors can wait in the waiting area outside of the unit until you are ready to go home. Your visitor can join you when your nurse is ready to teach you how to care for yourself at home

### **How is the test done?**

- Once you are in the Echocardiography Lab, the doctor will spray your throat with freezing to numb your gag reflex. You will then be given sedation through the IV
- A rigid flexible tube is passed through your mouth and into your esophagus. You will be able to breathe easily, but you may feel some cramping and pressure in your belly
- Pictures of your heart are taken through the scope. These pictures are very high quality because the lungs and ribs are not in the way
- When the test is over, you will be taken back to the unit. You will stay there until the sedation wears off. This usually takes about one hour

### **Are there risks with this test?**

- There is a 1 in 2000 chance of a bruise or tear if the esophagus
- Reactions to the medication (sedation) are rare

### **Care at home**

- Sedation might make you forgetful. It is common to not remember the test or talking to the doctor
- Do not eat or drink for 2 hours from the time your throat was sprayed. After 2 hours, try drinking some water. If you can swallow easily, you can start eating solid foods

- Because you had sedation during your test, you are considered legally impaired for 24 hours. Please plan **not** to:
  - Make important decisions or sign documents
  - Drive a car or work with heavy machinery
  - Do any dangerous activities like bike riding, swimming or climbing ladders
  - Travel alone by public transport e.g. bus or taxi
  - Go to work or do business
  - Drink alcohol, take sleeping pills or anti-anxiety medications
  - Be responsible for the care of another person e.g. baby, small child, person in poor health

**Call your doctor if you have:**

- Redness, soreness, or a small tender lump at the IV site that does not go away after a few weeks or that gets worse. Warm, wet cloths may help it feel better
- Blood in your mucous for longer than 24 hours after your test or if you are vomiting any amount of blood. It is normal to have a sore throat and to have a small amount of blood in your mucous for the first 24 hours

For non-emergency health information and services:

**HealthLinkBC** – health advice you can trust 24/7

Tel: 8.1.1. from anywhere in BC

Tel: 7.1.1. for deaf and hearing impaired assistance (TTY)

Web: [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)

**The information in this handout is intended only for the person it was given to by the health care team. It does not replace the advice or directions given to you by your doctor.**