

# Transthoracic Echocardiogram (Echo)

An Echo (Transthoracic Echocardiogram) is a specialised ultrasound examination of the heart. It is a very safe non-invasive procedure and does not involve radiation.

This procedure gives detailed information regarding the size, function and structure of your heart. The results are interpreted and reported by an Echocardiologist; a cardiologist with additional specialist training in cardiac ultrasound.

## Preparation

No preparation is required for an Echo. Food, water and medication can be taken as per your usual routine. However, in order to perform the test, clothing from the waist up needs to be removed to gain access to the chest. A hospital gown is then worn for the test. Ladies, for ease, we suggest wearing a two-piece outfit in preference to a dress.

## Test Duration

Allow approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes for your Echo appointment.

## Medicare Rebate Available

Yes.

## Procedure

Once changed, you will be asked to lie down on the examination bed. A cardiac technician will take your blood pressure and then place three small electrodes on your chest to monitor your heart rate during the echo. You will be positioned on your left side (if possible) for most of the examination time. A small transducer, with some ultrasound gel, will be used to image the heart from various positions on the chest. Various computer-generated noises may be heard during the echo, however these noises are completely normal and are used to assess blood flow through your heart.

Occasionally an ultrasound imaging agent may be used to obtain more detailed information. This may require the insertion of a small IV cannula. This will be discussed with the patient if the need arises.

Our cardiologists will review the images and a report will be forwarded to your referring doctor. The data obtained is stored on our computer to enable precise comparisons should you require future tests.

## Results

Your report will be sent directly to your referring doctor, usually within 24 hours. You do not need to wait for the report or any films, videos or CD's.