



## ACADEMIC CARDIOLOGY ASSOCIATES

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### GUIDE TO A TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM

#### What is a Transesophageal echocardiogram?

A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) is a diagnostic test that uses echocardiography to assess the function of your heart. During the procedure, a transducer (similar to a microphone) is inserted into your mouth and down your esophagus (the tube that leads from your throat to your stomach). The transducer uses harmless high frequency ultra sound waves to record images of your heart. The waves bounce or "echo" off of the heart structures allowing your physician to visualize the walls and valves of your heart. Because the esophagus lies behind the heart, a TEE may produce clearer images of areas of the heart that may be difficult to see with a regular echocardiogram.

#### PREPARING FOR YOUR TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM

Once you and your cardiologist have decided to proceed with a TEE, you will be scheduled and given a procedure date. Tell your doctor if have trouble swallowing or if you take medications for ulcers or a hiatal hernia. It is also important to notify our office if you are allergic to or sensitive to medications, local anesthesia or latex.

#### THE DAY BEFORE YOUR TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM

You should expect a call from the hospital admitting department by 6 PM the night before your procedure to confirm your appointment. If you are not contacted or will be out during this time, please contact them at 248-964-8429 prior to 8 PM. During this call, you will also be instructed where you should check in once you arrive at Beaumont. Since you will receive conscious sedation, it is important that you:

1. Do not eat or drink after midnight before your TEE.
2. **Do not stop any medications unless specifically instructed. Please remain on your anticoagulants.**
3. If you normally take a morning dose of heart medications, take them before coming to the hospital with one ounce or less of water unless instructed otherwise.
4. You must have an adult accompany you to the hospital since you will receive sedation or anesthesia.
5. Please also arrange for transportation home as you will not be allowed to drive for the remainder of the day.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT THE DAY OF YOUR TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM**

Transesophageal echocardiograms are performed in the Cath Lab. A nurse will review your medical history and confirm your daily medications (please provide a written list of all your current medications including the strengths and dosages). You will have time to ask questions of the staff and your doctor. The nurse will then review the procedure and have you sign an informed consent.

### **Prep Prior to the Procedure**

If you wear dentures or any oral prosthesis, they will need to be removed prior to the insertion of the TEE probe. A number of electrodes will be applied to your chest in order to obtain an electrocardiogram (EKG). Please do not use any moisturizing lotions or oils the day of the procedure. The nurse will place an intravenous (IV) line in your arm to administer the short acting sedation used for the procedure.

### **The Transesophageal echocardiogram**

You will be instructed to lie on a stretcher or bed, positioned on your left side. A pillow or wedge may be placed behind your back for support. Your vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate and oxygen levels) will be monitored throughout the procedure. The nurse will apply a local anesthetic spray to the back of your throat; this will numb your throat to make passing the TEE probe more comfortable. The nurse may also have you use an anesthetic mouthwash to gargle. The doctor will then gently insert the probe through your mouth and down your throat. You may be asked to swallow to help pass the probe. It is normal to gag when the tube is first placed in your throat but this sensation should go away. Once the probe is in the right place, images of the heart and its structures will be obtained.

### **After the Procedure**

Once the procedure is finished, you will be moved to the recovery unit where staff will continue to monitor your vital signs. When your gag reflex returns and your vital signs are stable the nurses will take off the electrodes and allow you to get dressed. Once the sedation has worn off, post procedure medication instructions will be reviewed with you and your family. The hospital staff will also provide you with written instructions. You will be given time to ask questions, when all your questions are answered, you will be free to go. Post procedure discharge time is about one hour after the procedure or at the discretion of the medical staff.

## **ONCE AT HOME**

You will not be allowed to eat or drink for approximately 3 hours after the TEE due to the anesthetic spray or anesthesia. Your throat may be sore for a few days following the procedure. Due to the residual effects of sedation, you may feel tired and should rest. Do not drink alcohol, drive, operate heavy machinery or make important decisions for at least 24 hours. You may resume your normal activity and diet the following day unless instructed otherwise. Contact our office right away if you experience:

- Trouble swallowing
- A stiff neck
- Shortness of breath,
- Chest pain,
- Or Bleeding

Please plan to follow-up with your cardiologist one month following your transesophageal echocardiogram.