

Guide to Transthoracic Echocardiography

A transthoracic echocardiogram (also called an "echo") is an ultrasound examination of the heart. Ultrasound (high frequency sound waves-not heard by the human ear) is sent into the body to outline tissue organs. In this test the sound waves are "bounced off" the heart and sent back as images that visualize cardiac structure and function and record blood flow within the heart.

An echocardiogram gives information about the size, position, movements of the valves and chambers and the speed of blood flow through the heart. It can be used to help diagnose abnormalities of the heart such as valve problems, enlargement or reduced function of the heart chambers, disorders of the pericardium (the sack around the heart) and many other conditions.

Pre-Registration and Testing Locations

Our office will call you 2 days before the date your test is scheduled to confirm your appointment. At this time we can also answer questions you may have. Please have your referring physician complete the [Echo Order Form](#). Plan to arrive 20 minutes before the scheduled time of your test. Bring your insurance cards with you. Go directly to the test location.

Echocardiograms are performed at two locations:

The Weill Greenberg Center

646-962-4733

1305 York Avenue (corner of E70 Street and York Avenue)

New York, NY 10021

Echocardiograms are performed on the 8th floor.

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center

212-746-4650

Echocardiography Laboratory

Starr Pavilion

520 East 70th Street, off York Avenue

New York, NY 10021

Take the Starr elevators to the 4th floor, make a right and follow the signs to room K-425.

Before the Echocardiogram

Prior to the echocardiogram:

- Do not apply lotions, oils or powders to the chest area
- You may eat and drink normally prior to having the test done
- You may take prescribed medications

Please bring a list of your medications and allergies

During the Echocardiogram

The test is usually performed in a darkened room. You will be asked to lie on your back, your left side and/or sit up. A lubricating gel will be applied to your skin over the heart area. A small smooth instrument (called a transducer) will be moved and/or tilted gently across your chest in various positions during the exam. The transducer picks up the sound waves from your heart and a live image of your heart is displayed on a TV monitor. At times during the exam you will hear a "swishing" sound (called Doppler) coming from the machine. This is the blood flow as it moves through the heart valves. You may feel pressure when the probe is pressed on the chest or mild discomfort. Test time is approximately 30-45 minutes.

✉ Contact

Cardiac Echocardiography Laboratory
Telephone: 646-962-4733