

Transesophageal Echocardiogram

A transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE) is a test that uses ultrasound (high-frequency sound waves) to look at the structures of the heart. Your care team inserts a probe into the esophagus (the tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach), and it takes pictures. Since the probe sits right behind the heart, it shows certain parts of the heart more clearly compared to a transthoracic echocardiogram, which is done outside the chest.

If you have any questions,
please talk with your
physician or nurse.

A TEE takes about 1 hour to do under sedation. Expect an additional 1 hour for recovery.

Before the test


If you are taking warfarin (Coumadin®), you will need an international normalized ratio (INR) blood test 1 to 3 days before the TEE. Your primary care physician can order this. Results must be available before the test.

If you are taking certain medications for weight loss or diabetes:

- › Stop injections for 7 days before the TEE.
- › Stop taking pills 1 day before the TEE.

Medications to stop taking include these:

- › Semaglutide (Ozempic®, Wegovy® or Rybelsus®)
- › Tirzepatide (Mounjaro® or Zepbound®)
- › Exenatide (Byetta® or Bydureon®)
- › Lixisenatide (Adlyxin®)

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- › Liraglutide (Saxenda® or Victoza®)
 - › Dulaglutide (Trulicity®)
 - › Dapagliflozin (Farxiga®)
 - › Empagliflozin (Jardiance)

The TEE procedure nurse will call you the day before the test. They will tell you what time to come to the hospital. They will also give you any other instructions you may need.

Please be prepared to not eat or drink after midnight the day of the procedure. However, you may take your usual medications the day of the test with a sip of water, except as stated above.

Day of the test


On the day of the test, come to the 8th floor Reception Desk in Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the reception desk on the 8th floor at check-in.

If you wear dentures or partials, you may wear them to the hospital, but you will have to remove them before the procedure. Tell the physician if you have any loose teeth or if you have trouble swallowing food or pills.

Be sure to bring:

- › A list of allergies
- › A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- › Your photo ID
- › Medical insurance information
- › Medicare card (Medicare patients only)



A responsible adult **must** accompany you out of the recovery area to take you home. You cannot leave here alone in a taxi, Uber®, Lyft® or public transportation. The sedation you will receive during the test causes drowsiness, dizziness and impaired judgment. It will be unsafe for you to drive or operate machinery until the next day.

During the test

To monitor you during the test, the staff will apply:

- › Electrocardiogram (ECG) electrodes to monitor your heart
- › A cuff on your arm to check your blood pressure
- › A finger clip (pulse oximeter) to monitor your oxygen level

Your care team may apply numbing medication to the back of your throat to reduce any discomfort. You will have a bite block in your mouth to protect your teeth. They will put an IV (into the vein) in your hand or arm. You will get a sedative medication to help you relax through the IV before the test begins.


During the test, the care team will help you lie on your left side. The physician will insert a thin, lubricated probe into your mouth and pass it down your esophagus. When the probe is in place, they will take pictures of your heart. They will remove the probe when they have all the pictures they need. You will wake up in the procedural room, and then a care team member will escort you to recovery.

After the test

The staff will monitor you for at least 1 hour after the test or until the sedative medication wears off. You will not be able to eat or drink anything for 2 hours after the test.

Important: If you are an outpatient, you must bring along a responsible adult to accompany you home after the test. You cannot leave here alone.

After the heart specialist reviews your test, they will put the results in your electronic medical record. Your physician will have access to the results and discuss them with you.



If you have any questions, call the Echocardiography Department at 312.926.7483 (TTY: 711). The staff will help you with any questions you may have.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](https://www.nm.org).