Resting Echocardiogram

This information explains what a resting echocardiogram is and what to expect during your procedure.

About Your Resting Echocardiogram

An echocardiogram, or echo, is a test that uses ultrasound to look at the structure and function of your heart. Ultrasound uses sound waves to create pictures.

If your heart’s structure or function isn’t normal, you may be having symptoms such as shortness of breath or chest pain. However, these symptoms can also be caused by other conditions. Your echo can help your doctor diagnose the cause of these symptoms.

Your echo lets your doctor know:

- How well your heart valves are working.
- How well your heart muscle is moving.
- How your blood is flowing.
- The size of the chambers of your heart.

During Your Procedure

On the day of your echo, wear a top that’s easy to take off. You will need to take it off to put on a hospital gown. You can keep your pants or skirt on during your procedure.

You will lie on an exam table on your left side. Your technician will put a gel on your chest. The gel conducts the signals from your heart.

Next, your technician will place a device called a transducer on different areas
on your chest. The transducer will use sound waves from your heart to create pictures. The pictures will appear on an ultrasound screen. You may have mild discomfort from the pressure of the transducer.

Your procedure will take about 30 minutes.

Your doctor should have the results of your echo 24 hours after your procedure. Call your doctor's office a few days after your procedure if you don’t hear from your doctor before then.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.