



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Resting Echocardiogram

This information explains what a resting echocardiogram (EH-koh-KAR-dee-oh-gram) is. It also explains what to expect before, during, and after your procedure.

A resting echocardiogram is also called a transthoracic (tranz-thor-A-sik) echocardiogram (TTE).

About your resting echocardiogram

An echocardiogram, or echo, is a procedure that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to make pictures of your heart.

A resting echo takes pictures of your heart while you're lying still and relaxed. A resting echo is also called a TTE because it takes pictures of your heart from outside your body. These pictures show the different parts of your heart and how they're working when your heart is at rest.

Your resting echo lets your doctor see:

- How well your heart muscle is moving.
- How well your heart valves are working.
- The size of the 4 chambers of your heart.
- How your blood flows through your heart valves and heart chambers.

If your heart is not working like it should, you may have symptoms, such as chest pain or trouble breathing. Your echo can help your doctor find the cause of these symptoms.

Ultrasound enhancing agent (UEA)

If the ultrasound pictures are not clear enough during your echo, you may get an ultrasound enhancing agent (UEA). A UEA helps create clearer pictures of your heart.

If you need a UEA, your care team will pause the echo to explain what is happening. They will:

- Explain why a UEA is needed and how it will help.
- Tell you what to expect during and after you get the UEA.
- Answer any questions you have and make sure you feel comfortable.

After you get the UEA, your technician will continue your echo and take more pictures of your heart.

Sometimes, your doctor may already know before your echo that you'll need a UEA. This may be based on your medical history or past imaging tests. If your doctor knows that you need a UEA, they'll tell you ahead of time.

What to do before your resting echocardiogram

On the day of your resting echo:

- Do not wear any jewelry around your neck.
- Do not wear any powder, lotion, or cream on your chest.
- You can eat and drink as usual.
- You can take all your usual medicines.

What to expect during your resting echocardiogram

Wear comfortable clothes that are easy to take off. You'll need to undress from the waist up and change into a hospital gown. You can keep your pants, shorts, or skirt on during your resting echo.

You'll lie on an exam table on your left side. Your technician can get the best pictures of your heart when you're in this position.

Your technician will put warm or cool gel on your chest. The gel helps sound waves travel through your skin, so your technician can see pictures of your heart.

Your technician will then move a handheld wand (called a transducer) around different areas of your chest. You may feel some pressure on your chest as they move the transducer. Your technician may ask you to change positions or hold your breath briefly, so they can get clear pictures. The pictures will appear on the ultrasound machine's screen.

Your resting echo will take about 30 minutes.

What to expect after your resting echocardiogram

Your doctor should have the results of your resting echo 24 hours (1 day) after your procedure. If you don't hear from your doctor after a few days, call their office to get your results.

If you have an MSK MyChart account, you'll be able to see your results as soon as they're available. You may see them before your doctor does. While some results are easy to understand, others may be confusing or worrying.

You can choose to look at your results, but we recommend waiting until you talk with your doctor. They can explain what your results mean.

If you do not have an MSK MyChart account, you can sign up at mskmychart.mskcc.org. You can also ask a member of your care team to send you an invitation.

If you need help with your account, call the MSK MyChart Help Desk at 646-227-2593. They're available Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Eastern time).

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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