



Echocardiogram

Your health care provider has scheduled you for an echocardiogram, or simply called an “echo”. It is a painless test that is very similar to an x-ray but without the radiation. Instead of using x-rays, it uses high frequency sound waves (ultrasound) to get a picture of the four chambers and the four heart valves. The sound waves bounce back from the heart chambers and valves, producing images and sounds that can be used by the physician to detect damage and disease. Because it does not involve any of the radiation that an x-ray does, it is a safe test. In fact, it uses the same technology that is used to evaluate a baby’s health before birth.

To do an echocardiogram, the technician prepares the chest area by applying a conductive gel. A small device is then places on the patient’s chest, and a picture of the area is seen immediately on a video monitor which records the results of the echocardiogram. The results of the echocardiogram will then be interpreted at a later date by a cardiologist.

Why is my doctor doing this test?

An echocardiogram is often given to patients who have experienced signs and symptoms suggestive of one or more of the following:

- An abnormal heart sound (heart murmur)
- Certain types of chest pain (e.g. angina)
- An abnormal electrocardiogram (EKG)
- An abnormal rhythm of the heart (arrhythmia)
- An abnormal chest x-ray
- Shortness of breath
- Symptoms of heart failure (shortness of breath & fatigue)

This diagnostic test also:

- Checks the health and performance of the heart valves
- Measures the heart wall and checks for abnormalities in the heart wall motion
- Detects disease or accumulation of fluid in the pericardium
- Identifies blood clots

YOUR ECHOCARIOGRAM IS SCHEDULE FOR:

Appointment date: _____ Time: _____

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call the office at (815) 726-2200.