

Ronald J. Bloom, MD, FACC
Brett Nowlan, MD, FACC, RPVI, ABCL
Patrick J. Corcoran, MD, FACC, FSCAI, RPVI
Carolyn M. Kosack, MD, FACC
Tracy Patel, MD, FACC, RPVI
Maria Theresa Santos, MD, FACC, RPVI



Cottage Grove Cardiology, P.C.
Specializing in Cardiovascular Medicine

Julian Esteban, MD, MS, FACC
Jawad Haider, MD, FACC
Vincent F. Romano, MD, FACC
Erin Vincent, PA-C
Gabriella Smith, PA-C
Jason Cornelio, PA-C

ABOUT ECHOCARDIOGRAMS

An echocardiogram (also called an echo) is a type of ultrasound test that uses high-pitched sound waves that are sent through a device called a transducer. The device picks up echoes of the sound waves as they bounce off the different parts of your heart. These echoes are turned into moving pictures of your heart that can be seen on a video screen.

An echocardiogram is safe because the test uses only sound waves to evaluate your heart. These high-frequency sound waves have not been shown to have any harmful effects.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE ECHOCARDIOGRAM?

During an echocardiogram, you will be given a hospital gown to wear. You will be asked to remove your clothing from the waist up. A cardiac sonographer will place three electrodes (small, flat, sticky patches) on your chest. The electrodes are attached to an electrocardiograph monitor (ECG or EKG) that charts your heart's electrical activity.

The sonographer will ask you to lie on your left side on an exam table. He or she will place a wand (called a sound-wave transducer) on several areas of your chest. The wand will have a small amount of gel on the end, which is not harmful to your skin. The gel is used to help produce clearer pictures.

Sounds are part of the Doppler signal. You may or may not hear the sounds during the test. You may be asked to change positions several times during the exam in order for the sonographer to take pictures of different areas of your heart. You may also be asked to hold your breath at times during the exam.

You should feel no major discomfort during the test, although you may feel coolness from the gel on the transducer and a slight pressure of the transducer on your chest.

The test will take approximately 40 minutes. After the test, you can get dressed and go about your daily activities. Your doctor will discuss your test results with you.

WHY IT IS DONE?

This test is done to:

- Look for the cause of abnormal heart sounds (murmurs or clicks), an enlarged heart, unexplained chest pains, shortness of breath, or irregular heartbeats.
- Check the thickness and movement of the heart wall.
- Look at the heart valves and check how well they work.
- See how well an artificial valve is working.
- Measure the size and shape of the heart's chambers.
- Check the availability of your heart chambers to pump blood (cardiac performance). During an echocardiogram, your doctor can calculate how much blood your heart is pumping during each heartbeat (ejection fraction). You might have a low ejection fraction if you have heart failure. Detect a disease that affects the heart muscle and the way it pumps, such as cardiomyopathy.
- Look for blood clots and tumors inside the heart. Look for congenital heart defects or to check the effectiveness of previous surgery to repair a congenital heart defect.
- Check how well your heart works after a heart attack.
- Identify the specific cause of heart failure.
- Look for a collection of fluid around the heart (pericardial effusion).
- Look for a thickening of the lining (pericardium) around the heart.
- Measure the speed at which blood travels through the heart.
- Measure the blood pressure and speed of blood flow through the heart valves.

PREPARATION: You do not need any special preparation for an Echocardiogram.

711 Cottage Grove Rd Bloomfield, CT 06002
25 Oakland Rd, #1, South Windsor, CT 06074 2 Concorde Way, Bldg 2, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 35 Nod Rd Ste 201A Avon, CT 06001
Phone (860) 242-8756 Fax (860) 242-3052 www.cottagegrovecardiology.com