



Niagara Health is pleased to provide you with general information about your upcoming exam. Patients are asked to register at Central Registration 30 minutes before their appointment time.

WHAT IS AN ECHOCARDIOGRAM?

An echocardiogram is a safe and painless diagnostic procedure that uses high frequency sound waves to take moving pictures of the heart. The sound waves are directed at the heart from a small, hand held transducer (camera) which sends and receives signals that appear on the screen as a moving image of the heart.

These images are in black and white and color can be added to show the blood moving in and out of the chambers. Many measurements are taken during the test to determine how well your heart is working.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST?

No special preparations are required. Patients may eat and perform normal activities (unless otherwise instructed), and continue to take medications as prescribed by their Physician.

HOW LONG IS THIS TEST?

The test takes approximately 45 minutes from start to finish. A specially trained sonographer will perform the test, keeping patient comfort and safety in mind.

DOES IT HURT?

Ultrasound cannot be felt and does not hurt. If patients experience any discomfort, they should notify the sonographer performing the test. There are no known harmful effects from diagnostic cardiac ultrasound.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE TEST?

- Patients will be given an explanation before the test starts and have time to ask questions.
- Patients will be asked to disrobe from the waist up, and be given a gown to put on.
- Three electrodes will be attached to the patient's chest to obtain an ECG signal.
- A blood pressure will be done once, at the beginning.
- Patients will be asked to lie on the examining table on their left side during the test and a series of images and measurements will be acquired over the course of the 45 minutes.

HOW DO I GET THE RESULTS?

Although the sonographer performing the test can see what is occurring with the patient's heart, he/she cannot provide any information. The test must be read and interpreted by the Cardiologist who will then send a report to the Physician who requested the test and that Physician will release the results of your test.