



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Resting Echocardiogram

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

About your resting echocardiogram

An echocardiogram, or echo, is a procedure that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to create pictures of your heart. These pictures show the different parts of your heart and how they're working.

Your echo lets your doctor see:

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

If your heart is not working as it should, you may have chest pain or trouble breathing. These symptoms can also be caused by other conditions. Your echo can help your doctor find the cause of these symptoms.

Some people may need to get an ultrasound enhancing agent (UEA) for their echo. A UEA helps your doctor see the parts of your heart better. If you will need a UEA, your healthcare provider will give you more information about it.

What to expect during your resting echocardiogram

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

You will lie on an exam table on your left side. Your technician will put a gel on your chest. The gel helps conduct the signals from your heart, so the technician can see images of your heart.

Next, your technician will place a handheld wand called a transducer on different areas of 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 during the echo from the slight pressure of the transducer.

Your echo will take about 30 minutes.

What to expect after your resting echocardiogram

Your doctor should have the results of your 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 will 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 your doctor calls you. They usually call within 24 hours of your echo. They can explain what your results mean.

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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