

Illinois Heart & Lung Associates - Patient Services

Echocardiogram

What is an Echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram or "echo" is a test that uses ultrasound waves to study your heart's structure and function. It is a painless examination that takes approximately 45 minutes to perform. It can provide valuable information that can help your doctor(s) offer you the best possible care.



How is it done?

Before starting the exam, our technician will probably ask you some brief medical questions. You will be asked to undress from the waist up and to put on a gown. Every effort will be made to preserve your modesty. Three adhesive patches (electrodes) will be placed on your skin to record your heart rhythm. A transducer or ultrasound probe with conducting gel will then be placed at various places on your chest and abdomen in order to obtain different views or pictures of your heart.

Benefits

Ultrasound is a completely safe way to learn more about your heart's structure and function. It is also considerably less expensive and invasive than other methods that are sometimes used to obtain the same information. It requires no special preparation on your part, and it can be done conveniently in our office.

Limitation

Even though an echocardiogram can provide valuable information, it does not always eliminate the need for further cardiac testing.