



West Kent
Cardiology Partnership

72 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5EF

Tel: 01892 526726 Fax: 01892 526200 Email: info@wkcardiology.co.uk Web: www.wkcardiology.co.uk

Trans-oesophageal echo (TOE) Patient Information

This information sheet is intended to answer questions that you may have about the TOE procedure.

What is a TOE?

Behind the heart lies the gullet or oesophagus and in front are the lungs. Ultrasound pictures (an echocardiogram) taken by placing a probe on the chest view have some limitations because the heart is partially obscured by the lungs. An ultrasound probe positioned in the oesophagus however allows unobscured and thus more detailed pictures of the heart to be taken.

What preparation is required?

You must have had nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours prior to the procedure.

What Does the Procedure Involve?

You will be asked to wear a hospital gown. During the procedure your heart rhythm, blood pressure and blood oxygen levels will be measured. You will be given oxygen via a small tube placed under your nose. If you wear dentures you will be asked to remove them. A small tube will be placed in the back of your hand. The back of your throat will be sprayed with a local anaesthetic which makes it numb and you will then be given an injection of a drug which will make you drowsy. You will then be asked to swallow a tube attached to which is an ultrasound probe.

Does it Take Long?

The procedure usually takes about fifteen minutes although precise times vary.

Will it Hurt?

You will be sedated and thus unaware of most of the procedure. Some people find swallowing the probe difficult and very few patients are unable to swallow the probe. Most people find that they cannot remember the procedure afterwards.



West Kent Cardiology Partnership

72 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 5EF

Tel: 01892 526726 Fax: 01892 526200 Email: info@wkcardiology.co.uk Web: www.wkcardiology.co.uk

How Long Will I Need to Stay In?

This depends on the precise circumstances. Generally you will be admitted to hospital in the morning and have the procedure performed in the afternoon. Most patients will go home that evening. ***You must not drive or operate machinery the evening following the procedure and must be accompanied home. Your mouth will be numb for about four hours after the procedure and you should not eat or drink anything hot during this time.***

What Happens Afterwards?

After the procedure you will be monitored until the effects of the sedation have worn off. Your consultant will then discuss with you the results of the test and any changes to your treatment or further investigations that you may require.

Are There Any Risks Involved?

As with any medical procedure there is a small risk associated with TOE. Serious complications such as damage to the oesophagus or breathing difficulties do occur but these are extremely rare.