

Great Lakes Heart Center of Alpena

Patient Education Handout

TRANSESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY

A transesophageal echocardiogram, also referred to as TEE, is a special ultrasound examination using a specialised scope called a TEE probe. This incorporates an ultrasound transducer. The probe is inserted into the patient's esophagus, which anatomically is immediately behind the heart. From this vantage point images of the different cardiac structures are remarkably clearer and more detailed.

A transesophageal echocardiogram may be useful in these situations:

- When a TTE (transthoracic echocardiogram) provides suboptimal images,
- Detecting the presence of valve infections and their complications,
- Determining the severity of mitral regurgitation,
- When a stroke may have originated or passed through the heart,
- When tears of the aorta (aortic dissection) are suspected.

In order to pass the TEE probe into the esophagus, the throat is first sprayed with a local anesthetic. Light sedation may also be given.

Preparation

Because you may receive sedation, have someone available to drive you home after the procedure!

- Do not eat or drink at least 4 hours prior to the procedure,
- Tell your doctor of any allergies as well as what medications you are taking,
- Tell your doctor of any history of bleeding problems, history of gastric ulcers, difficulty swallowing or previous esophageal or stomach surgery,

Complications

Although rare, complications that can occur with transesophageal echocardiography include:

- Transient pain on swallowing,
- Pulmonary aspiration,
- Rupture or perforation of the esophagus,
- Reactions to the medications given.