Interior Health

Introduction – Echocardiography

An echocardiogram is a diagnostic procedure that uses ultrasound to examine the heart. The echocardiogram allows the cardiologist (or radiologist) to see the heart as it beats, determine if the valves are working properly, determine the size of the chambers and blood vessels, and measure the thickness of the heart walls.

Procedure

Preparation There is no preparation required.

How it Works The patient lays on an examining bed and is scanned using a small hand held device-called a transducer. A small amount of water-based gel is used as the contact between the transducer and skin. Images are recorded and then viewed by a radiologist/cardiologist. The procedure takes approximately 45-60 minutes.

Benefits Ultrasound is a good option for viewing the heart as it is non-invasive, cost-effective and does not use any radiation.

Risks There are no known harmful risks.

Referrals

Referral required.

Results

A radiologist or cardiologists are physicians specifically trained to supervise and interpret echocardiography examinations. They will analyze the images and send a report to your referring physician, who will share the results with you.

Language

If the patient has difficulty understanding English, an interpreter needs to accompany the patient.