



Patient & Family Guide  
2021

# Echocardiogram

Aussi disponible en français :  
*Échocardiogramme* (FF85-1744)



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# Echocardiogram

## What is an echocardiogram?

- This is a painless and safe test of the heart.
- It shows the size, shape, movement, and flow of blood through the heart.
- Soundwaves (ultrasound) are used to get a picture of the heart which can then be seen on a computer screen.
- The pictures are saved for the doctor to review.

## How do I get ready for the test?

- There is no preparation for the test.
- You will need to change from the waist up into a hospital gown. Pants or a skirt can be worn during the test.

## Who will do the test?

- The test will be done by a cardiac sonographer (ultrasound specialist).
- A cardiologist (a doctor who specializes in diseases of the heart) will review the pictures.

## **What happens during the test?**

- Small stickers called electrodes will be placed on your chest. They are connected to the ultrasound machine.
- The room lights will be lowered so the pictures on the computer screen can be seen easily.
- An ultrasound probe will be moved around on your chest during the test.
- A small amount of ultrasound jelly will be placed on your chest. This helps to make good contact between your skin and the ultrasound probe.
- The sonographer will ask you to lie on your left side.
- The sonographer may ask you to breathe in and out slowly, or to hold your breath.
- You will have to stay still, as moving can change the pictures.
- If the sonographer is having a hard time getting a clear picture of your heart, the health care provider may inject a medication called a contrast agent into a vein in your arm. This will help make the picture clear.

# How long will the test take?

The test will take about 45 minutes.

## After the test

- You can go back to your usual activities.
- The cardiologist may wish to do further testing or examine you.

**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

### Looking for more health information?

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.