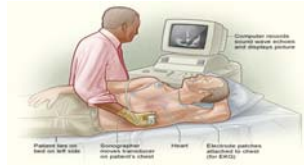


# UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER

## PATIENT EDUCATION

### ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY



Your physician has referred you to the Diagnostic Services Department at United Hospital Center for a test called Echocardiography to learn about your heart's size, shape, movement, and surrounding structures. There is no special preparation for this exam.

Once you reach the echocardiography lab you'll undress and put on a hospital gown or cover yourself with a large, sheet like, drape. You will see an examining table, some machines, and a TV screen. The lab will be darkened to help the sonographer view the TV screen.

The sonographer will ask you to lie on the table on your left side. The sonographer will also apply disk shaped electrodes on your chest and arms. These electrodes will record the electrical activity coming from your heart. A gel will be applied to your chest and an instrument, called a transducer, will be held over your heart.

The echocardiography machine generates high pitched sound waves and the transducer will transmit them toward your heart. The sound waves will bounce off your heart walls, valves, and surrounding structures and will be received by the same transducer that transmitted them. These echoes will be translated electronically into an image of your heart. Heart structures will be seen on the TV screen and recorded on a videotape for the Cardiologist to interpret. You will occasionally hear sounds coming from the ultrasound machine. This is the sound of blood passing through valves in your heart.

The sonographer may obtain a series of heart images by positioning the transducer at different angles to observe different parts of your heart. You may be asked to breath in and out slowly or to hold your breath. Changes in the way your heart functions during each task will be noted. Remember to stay still during the test because movements can distort results. Upon completing the exam, the sonographer will remove the transducer and electrodes and wipe the gel off your chest.

Please keep in mind that though the sonographer is well qualified to perform your sonogram, only a physician may interpret it. Therefore, sonographers do not discuss results with patients. Any questions regarding the results of your sonogram should be directed to the physician who requested your exam.

**LENGTH:** Approximately 30 minutes

**DISCLAIMER:** The content contained in this patient education is presented solely with the intent of providing public service information on health and health-related issues. This information is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult your physician or other qualified health provider prior to utilizing any of the information presented in this patient education. UHC makes no warranty, representation or guaranty as to the content, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of the information presented in this patient education or that the information may be relied upon for any reason.