

Answers to Common Concerns About Transesophageal Echocardiography

Your healthcare provider has advised that you have transesophageal echocardiography, or T-E-E for short. If you're feeling nervous about having this test, that's absolutely normal.

To help ease your mind, focus on this: With T-E-E, your healthcare provider will be able to better identify your heart problem. Afterward, you'll be on your way to feeling better!

Knowing what to expect with this procedure can also help you feel less anxious and better prepared. Here are the facts behind some common concerns about transesophageal echocardiography.

Will it hurt? T-E-E uses ultrasound waves to make images of your heart. These sound waves won't cause any pain. Still, you may feel a little discomfort as your healthcare provider moves the probe down your esophagus, or food pipe, which runs right behind your heart.

So before the test, your care team will talk with you about sedation. You'll then get medicine through an IV. It will help keep you relaxed and comfortable during the test.

Will I gag? Truth is, you may feel like gagging for a short time when your healthcare provider first puts the probe down your throat. To help prevent that from happening, your provider will numb your throat with medicine.

You'll also be closely watched throughout the test for any discomfort.

What about the risks?

Most procedures have some risks, like the chance for an infection or bleeding.

Added risks with T-E-E include trouble breathing or a tear in the lining of your esophagus.

Keep in mind, though, such events are rare, and your care team knows exactly how to keep you safe.

You can do your part, too, by following all pre- and post-procedure instructions. And if you have any questions, ask away!

How will I feel afterward?

After the test, you won't be able to eat or drink until the numbness in your throat goes away, and your throat may be sore for a few days. You may also have some nausea from the sedation. If that's the case, speak up right away! Your care team can help you feel better quickly with fluids and medicine.

In fact, most people are back to their normal activities within 24 hours.

Still have questions or concerns? Your care team is here to help. Get in touch to learn more about all you can do to make sure your test goes smoothly.