

## **Transoesophageal echocardiography**

### **Why is this examination done?**

We use echocardiography to examine the size of your heart chambers and how vigorously they contract, as well as the structure and functioning of your heart valves. In transoesophageal echocardiography, we insert a flexible probe (about 1 cm in diameter) into your oesophagus. This shows your heart structure and activity in more detail than we can see through the chest wall.

### **How should I prepare for the examination?**

- You should not eat or drink for at least **six hours** before the examination.
- You may take your medications normally with a small amount of water on the day of the examination.

A small amount of liquid anaesthetic will be used in your throat, so you should tell us in advance about any allergies you may have or any disorders that affect your throat or oesophagus.

### **How is this examination done?**

First we will perform transthoracic echocardiography (examination through the chest wall).

Before the transoesophageal echocardiography, we may insert an intravenous catheter (cannula) into a vein in your arm, and we will give you a liquid anaesthetic drink (about 15 ml) to control the gag reflex.

During the transoesophageal echocardiography, you will lie on your left side with your chin tucked in towards your chest and a mouth guard placed between your teeth or gums. Any dentures you have will need to be taken out for the examination. First we will insert the probe into your throat through your mouth. We will ask you to swallow while we gently advance the probe so that it slides down your throat into your oesophagus. Your airway will stay open the entire time. The examination takes about ten minutes.

### **How long will the examination last?**

The examination takes about 60 minutes in all. The transthoracic echocardiography takes about half an hour and the transoesophageal echocardiography takes about ten minutes.

Note that our department also performs emergency studies, so the start of your examination may be delayed.

## **What happens after the examination?**

You should not eat or drink for **at least one hour** after the examination, until your throat has recovered from the anaesthetic. Then you may eat and drink normally.

## **Where can I get the examination results?**

The ward or clinic that is treating you will tell you about the examination results.

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