

A Guide to Transoesophageal Echo (TOE)

Patient Information Cardiology

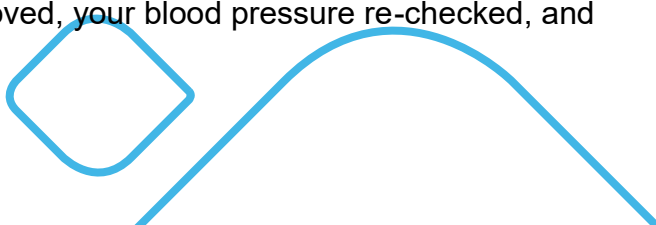
What is a transoesophageal echo?

A transoesophageal echo (TOE) is a heart scan that uses ultrasound to produce images of the heart. It involves swallowing a soft, flexible tube, as the pictures are taken via the oesophagus (gullet). This produces high quality pictures of the valves and structure of the heart and will help the doctor make an informed decision on your treatment.

Why do I need a transoesophageal echo?

Your doctor has requested this procedure to help decide on the best treatment for your heart.

What does a transoesophageal echo involve?

- This procedure is performed as a day-case, so you will not need to be admitted to hospital for an overnight stay.
 - Three people will usually be present to perform the scan, a doctor, a physiologist and a nurse.
 - You will have your heart monitored throughout the scan and your blood pressure and oxygen levels will be checked. You may be given oxygen. You will be able to breathe normally throughout the test.
 - If you have dentures these will be removed.
 - You will have local anaesthetic sprayed on the back of your throat and then asked to lie flat and roll onto your left side.
 - A 'drip' will be placed in your arm, and you may be given intravenous sedation which is recommended for this procedure.
 - Sedation involves giving an injection of small amounts of medication in the back of your hand or arm, which makes you physically and mentally relaxed during a procedure where your cooperation is needed. It will also reduce any anxiety you have about your treatment.
 - You will be asked to swallow the TOE probe. This may cause discomfort but is not painful. Recorded images of the heart will then be obtained. The test will take about 20-30 minutes.
 - At the end of the procedure the tube will be removed, your blood pressure re-checked, and you will have a short period of recovery.
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Are there any risks or side effects of the TOE?

TOE is an extremely safe procedure, but there are some risks and side effects to be aware of:

- It is not uncommon to have a sore throat after the procedure; this may last for a day or two.
- Occasionally the throat may bruise or bleed slightly.
- There is a small chance of inhaling stomach contents during the procedure. **It is essential that you have nothing to eat or drink for six hours before the procedure.**
- There is a small risk (less than 1 in 10,000) of damaging or tearing the gullet. In extreme circumstances this may require an operation to repair the damage.

What are the risks of sedation?

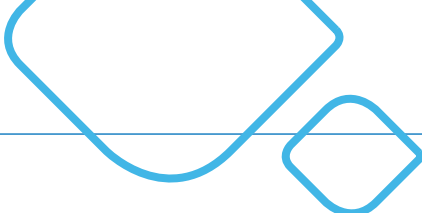
After the procedure you may feel very sleepy for several hours. Response to sedation varies from one person to another. Your breathing may become very slow. Your doctor or nurse may give you oxygen to help you breathe. Your blood pressure may become lower. If this occurs you may be given intravenous fluids ("put on a drip") for a short time. Some people can feel sick (nauseous) owing to the drugs used in sedation.

What do I need to do before the test?

- **Please do not have anything to eat, or drink anything for 6 hours before the test.**
- Normal early medications should be taken on the morning of the test, with a small sip of water, **no further medication in the six hours prior to the procedure. Please bring a list of your medication with you.**
- If you are diabetic, please inform the nurse on arrival and call 01225 825394/821479 on receipt of this letter.
- If you take warfarin, please ensure your INR has been checked within the preceding seven days and the result phoned through to 01225 821479
- Please inform the hospital if you have any problems with sedation, swallowing, bleeding from your stomach, or if you have any loose teeth. This may prevent the TOE from being performed.
- If you have Sick Cell Disease, please inform the hospital as sedation is contraindicated in this condition.

What happens after the TOE?

- You will be monitored for a short period after the procedure particularly if you have had sedation.
- Due to the sedation you may remember little about what happened and often you will remember nothing.
- After 1 hour, when the sensation in your throat has returned to normal, you may drink cold fluids. Warm fluids and food allowed after 2hrs.
- If you have had sedation, you must be accompanied home by a friend or relative and have someone to look after you for the next 24hrs.
- The doctor will prepare a report following the procedure and inform your consultant of the result.



Discharge advice following Transoesophageal echocardiography (TOE)

You should go straight home and rest for the remainder of the day.

You may be offered sedation before and during your procedure. Sedation is administered intravenously through a cannula and works quickly to help you relax for the procedure. Sedation may cause side effects (e.g. drowsiness, light-headedness, nausea) though these are usually short lived.

If you are given sedation, please be aware of the following:

- Increased risk of falling, particularly if you are older or frail. You should have someone responsible staying with you for 24 hours after the procedure
- You cannot drive for 24 hours and will need to plan for someone to collect you (unless hospital transport is being provided)
- Avoid alcohol consumption for 24 hours after your procedure as this is likely to prolong the effects of sedation and cause you to be excessively drowsy
- Avoid making legal decisions or signing legal documentation for at least 24 hours
- Do not operate heavy machinery for at least 24 hours

The effects of sedation vary from one person to another. If you have specific questions relating to the use of sedation medications, please do not hesitate to ask your healthcare provider.

Please complete the following health questionnaire

Do you consider yourself fit and well? Has there been any recent change in your health since your last out-patient appointment?

Do you have or have ever had any of the following problems? Please give details:

1. Have you ever been told that you are at risk of CJD or CJD for public health purposes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please call 01225 825394 or 01225 821479 and talk to our nursing staff.

2. Are you taking any regular medication? If yes, please provide details.

3. Who is collecting you? Please give their name and contact details.

4. Who is at home with you for 24 hours after the test?

When will I know the results?

A report will be sent to your GP. Further details of the test, results of any biopsies and any necessary treatments or medications will be your next outpatient appointment.

The consent form information

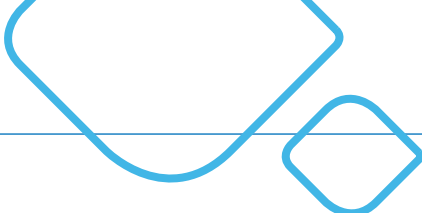
The consent form gives the doctor and the hospital a formal indication that you are agreeing to undergo the treatment being offered as stated in the form. It is valuable to you as it offers a written check on what you are agreeing to by signing.

If you are unclear and have any questions, then do not sign the form until they have been answered. The cardiology staff will be happy to answer any questions you might have. Alternatively, you can speak to the doctor performing the test.

Are there Doctors training in Transoesophageal Echo?

Training doctors is essential to improving the quality of care. All our trainees are in a structured training programme and are all experienced doctors. Your treatment may provide an opportunity for such training under the supervision of a senior doctor. You may decline to be involved in this training without adversely affecting your care and treatment. If you wish to let us know you are not happy to have a supervised trainee perform your procedure, please inform your nurse during the consenting process.





What if I change my mind?

You are quite within your rights to change your mind. If having read this leaflet you have decided not to go ahead with the test, please telephone the Cardiac Centre on 01225 824070/821479 between Monday and Friday 07.00-17.00, and discuss your decision with your GP.

If you feel unwell on returning home, then please contact your GP.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Cardiology Day Case Unit (CDCU) between the hours 07:00 and 17:00hrs Monday to Friday **01225 825394**

Outside these hours, please contact your GP or 111.

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

