

# TRANSOESOPHAGEAL ECHOCARDIOGRAM (TOE)



## ***What is a TOE (Transoesophageal Echocardiogram)?***

A transoesophageal echocardiogram requires the insertion of an ultrasound probe down the oesophagus to take ultrasound images of the heart. This test is used to:

- Check your heart size and function
- Check your heart valves
- Check for heart masses, tumours or infections

## ***How is a TOE done?***

- An anaesthetist, a cardiologist, a Sonographer and a nurse will be present during the procedure. The anaesthetist will place a small cannula in your arm to administer some medication for sedation. The anaesthetist will then spray your throat with a numbing agent to aid in passage of the probe.
- A blood pressure cuff and an oxygen saturation monitor will be positioned to monitor your vital signs. Nasal prongs administering oxygen will be in place during the procedure.
- Before passing the probe into the oesophagus, you will be turned on to your left side and a bite guard will be positioned between your teeth to prevent any damage to the probe.
- The anaesthetist will then administer some medication to make you feel sleepy. This allows for easy passage of the probe into the oesophagus. The cardiologist can then make a detailed examination of your heart.
- Once the probe is positioned correctly, the procedure takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. You will remain in the ward under observation until you have recovered.
- After the procedure, do not eat or drink anything until the numb feeling in your throat subsides. You may begin to eat and drink about 2 hours after the test.
- Generally you will be discharged from hospital on the same day as the procedure. You must go home accompanied, even if traveling by taxi.
- Do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery for 24 hours. You may still feel drowsy. It is best to rest for the remainder of the day.

## ***Are there any risks associated with the test?***

As with any invasive procedure, there are a small number of risks involved and it is important that you are aware of these risks:

- Reaction to sedative drugs – rare
- Respiratory complications – rare
- Perforation of the oesophagus – very rare

## ***How do I prepare for the test?***

- You must attend the reception of the hospital at the nominated time (ie. either Gold Coast Private Hospital or John Flynn Private Hospital).
- **You must not have ANYTHING to eat or drink for 6 hours prior to the appointment time.**
- You will need someone to drive you home.

## ***When will I receive my results?***

The results of the test are briefly discussed after the procedure, however follow-up with your referring doctor is required. The results of your test will be sent to your referring doctor.

## ***Further Information:***

We will contact the hospital to arrange the procedure. The hospital will then telephone you to confirm your appointment and any details of your health cover which may be required. Should you have not heard from them, we recommend you telephone the hospital to confirm the booking. Telephone numbers for the hospitals are as follows:

- Gold Coast Private Hospital – Ph: (07) 5530 0300
- John Flynn Private Hospital – (07) 5598 9000

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you are unable to attend your appointment, please telephone us at least 24 hours prior to the appointment date, so that we may notify all relevant parties of the cancellation.

***Should you have any specific queries or concerns relating to your procedure,  
please discuss these with your Cardiologist.***