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## What to expect and how to prepare for your upcoming appointment.

### ECHOCARDIOGRAM (ECHO)

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#### HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR MY ECHO?

- Please arrive 10 minutes early for your appointment with your provincial health care card and ID such as your driver's licence or social insurance card.
- Do not wear creams or lotions on your chest.
- You may eat and drink normally.

#### What is an ECHO?

An echo uses sound waves to create pictures of your heart's chambers, valves, walls and the blood vessels (aorta, arteries, veins) attached to your heart.

#### Why do I need an ECHO?

An echo may be done to assess a variety of heart conditions, such as:

- heart murmurs
- damage to heart muscle in those who have had a heart attack
- infections in the heart
- heart valve conditions (such as a leaky heart valve)

It may also be recommended if you are experiencing:

- abnormal heart sounds
- shortness of breath
- palpitations
- angina (chest pain) or if you have a history of stroke
- Echos can also help your doctor evaluate the effectiveness of medical or surgical treatments.

#### What happens during my ECHO?

- The exam takes between 35-40 minutes to complete. It is painless and safe.
- You lie on a padded exam table (usually on your left side) and a sonographer will apply warm gel to your chest.
- The sonographer uses a special wand called a transducer across your chest to take images of your heart. You may occasionally hear noises which is the "Doppler" effect - this helps measure blood flow.
- You may be asked to breathe slowly or to hold your breath while the sonographer obtains the necessary images.
- A cardiologist at Vita Diagnostics will review the images obtained during your echo and your results will be communicated to your referring doctor.