

Echo / Doppler

Echocardiography is an ultrasound test that gives excellent pictures of the structures of the heart. It evaluates the size, shape and motion of these structures. Important information may be obtained on the function of the pumping chambers of the heart and of the valves. This test is entirely painless and safe. It takes about 15 to 30 minutes; Cardiac Doppler is also an ultrasound test. It too is painless and safe. It may be used to find leaky cardiac valves and/or the presence of tightened or stenotic valves. The test takes about 10 to 20 minutes. In both tests a transducer (a small instrument looking something like a stethoscope) coated with conductive jelly will be placed on the chest and moved along the chest wall over the areas to be examined.

Trans-esophageal Echocardiography (TEE)

In some patients in whom external or trans-thoracic echocardiography does not provide diagnostic information, an ultrasound transducer can be placed into the esophagus to provide close and excellent pictures of the cardiac structures. Such a procedure is much like a gastroscopy and is usually carried out under sedation. The Ottawa Cardiovascular Centre does not perform TEE on site, but both Dr. Fulop and Dr. Dawdy are trained in TEE. The test is usually carried out in a hospital-based Echo Laboratory.

