



# Leachman Cardiology Associates, P.A.

AN AFFILIATE OF TEXAS HEART INSTITUTE

## ECHOCARDIOGRAM

### What is it?

An echocardiogram (often called "echo") is a graphic outline of the heart's movement. During an echocardiogram test, high frequency sound waves (from a hand-held wand placed on your chest) provide pictures of the heart's valves and chambers and helps the sonographer evaluate the pumping action of the heart. Echo is combined with Doppler ultrasound and color Doppler to evaluate blood flow across the heart's valves.

### What do I do?

- Eat and drink as you normally would on the day of the test
- Take all of your medications at the usual times, as prescribed by your doctor
- You should feel no major discomfort during the test. You may feel a coolness from the gel on the transducer and a slight pressure of the transducer on your chest

### What will happen?

- You will be asked to remove your clothing from the waist up and put on a gown.
- The cardiac sonographer will place three electrodes on your chest. The electrodes are attached to an electrocardiograph monitor (EKG) that charts your heart's electrical activity.
- The sonographer will ask you to lie on your left side on an exam table. The sonographer will place a transducer on several areas of your chest. The transducer will have a small amount of gel on the end, which will not harm your skin. The gel helps produce clearer pictures.
- Sounds are part of the Doppler signal. You may or may not hear the sounds during the test.
- You may be asked to change positions several times during the exam in order for the sonographer to take pictures of different areas of your heart. You may also be asked to hold your breath at times.

### How long does it take?

The test will take about forty (40) minutes. After the test, the sonographer will give you further instructions.