

## Patient Procedure **Echocardiogram**

### INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TEST

- This is an ultrasound of the heart. An ultrasound uses sound waves to create an image (picture) on the monitor.
- An echocardiogram evaluates the size and function of each chamber of the heart including all blood vessels emptying into and carrying blood away from the heart.
- The echocardiogram also evaluates the function of all 4 valves inside the heart and can evaluate for stenosis (narrowing of the valve) or leakage of the valve (regurgitation or prolapse).
- In certain cases, this test can also be used to evaluate abnormalities in heart structures, assess for clots in the heart, rule out infection or masses inside the heart and assess for fluid collection or inflammation around the heart.
- Occasionally, we may suggest using lipid or salt water bubbles that we call “contrast” to enhance the pictures. If contrast is necessary, this will require an IV.

### HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCEDURE TAKE?

- The procedure takes about an hour.

### WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THIS PROCEDURE?

- There is no particular preparation needed prior to this procedure.
- You should take all of your normal medications as prescribed before this procedure.
- You will be asked to remove your shirt and bra if applicable, prior to this procedure.
- We recommend urinating just prior to this procedure so that you are comfortable during the procedure.

### WHO PERFORMS/INTERPRETS THIS PROCEDURE?

- This procedure is performed by a cardiac sonographer who is an ultrasound specialist in imaging the heart.
- The procedure is interpreted by a cardiologist with advanced echocardiography certification.

#### WHY IS THIS PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

- An echocardiogram helps to diagnose many types of heart disease, including the following:
  - Atherosclerosis (coronary artery disease)
  - Aneurysm (bulging of the blood vessel wall)
  - Cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle)
  - Congenital (birth) heart disease
  - Heart Failure (heart muscle weakness)
  - Left ventricular hypertrophy (enlargement)
  - Pericarditis (infection)
  - Valvular heart disease (structural defect)
- An echocardiogram may be done to evaluate signs or symptoms of the conditions above and/or problems with the heart such as abnormalities in motion of the heart wall, blood clots, and heart valve abnormalities. It also measures the strength of the heart muscle (ejection fraction).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at [www.highlandheart.urmc.edu](http://www.highlandheart.urmc.edu)