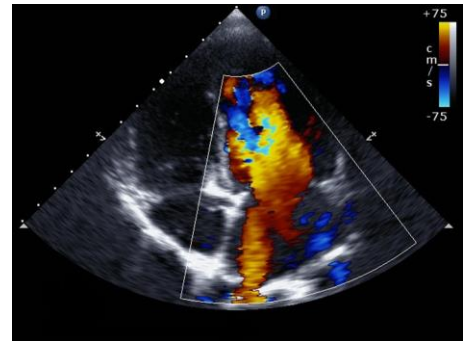
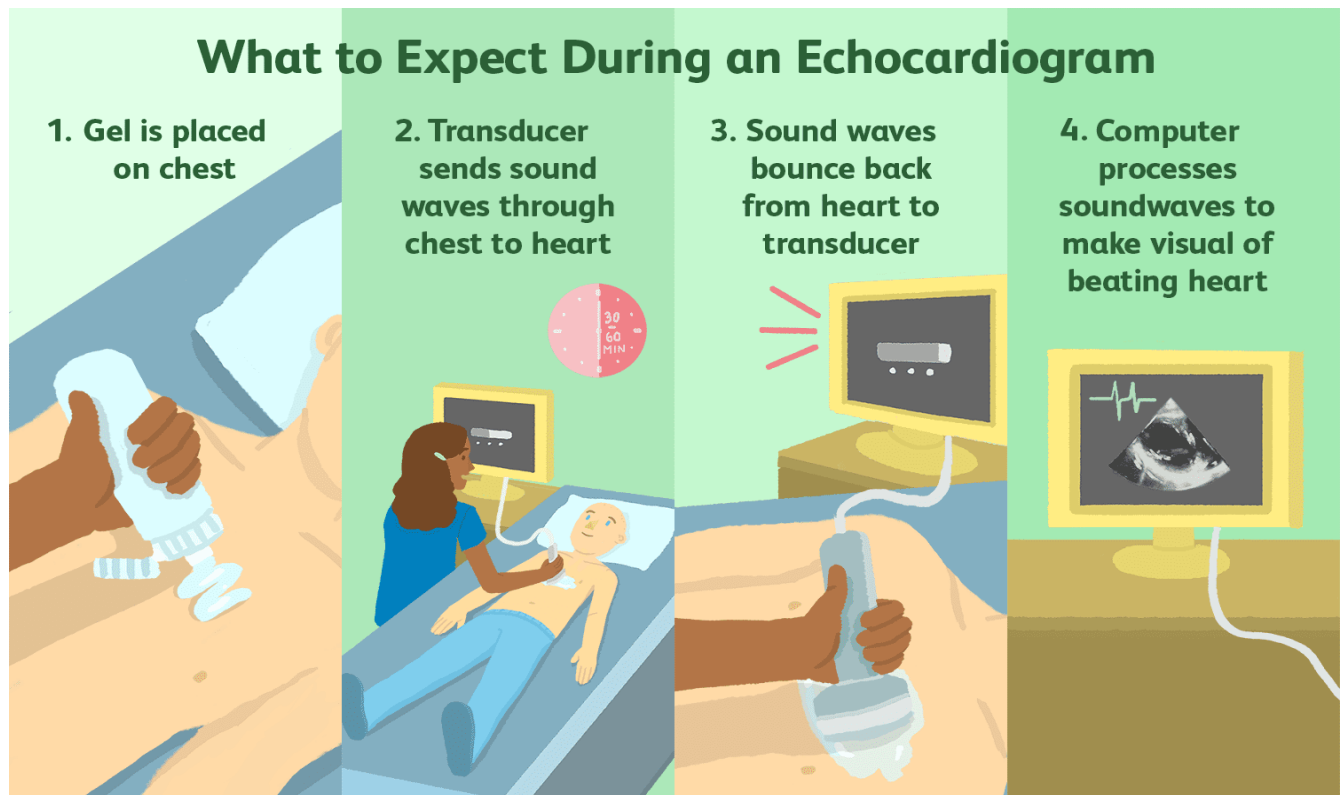


THE ECHOCARIOGRAM (ECHO)

The echocardiogram is a cardiac ultrasound test. During the procedure a probe called a transducer is passed over the chest in the region of the heart. The probe sends out sound waves at a frequency too high to be heard. The sound waves move through the skin and other body tissues to the heart tissue where they bounce or “echo” off the heart structures back to the probe. They are then sent to a computer that can create moving pictures of the heart structures which are viewed on video monitor.



The test is painless and does not have side effects. It is done in a dark room to be able to better see the pictures on the monitor. Gel is placed on the skin to help the sound waves to pass through the skin. The gel is cold so for added comfort we warm our gel before use.



Babies and young infants are often terrified by just being in a new environment and by the removal of their clothing to expose the chest. We therefore have various means of getting them relaxed and settled. On rare occasions arrangements have to be made for sedation to be given during the procedure.

The pictures obtained give information about heart structure and function. Doppler ultrasound technique is also included to assess flow of blood through the heart valves and chambers.