

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Echo
- Fiber
- Chicken Salad
- New Heart Failure Drug

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## What is an Echocardiogram?

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound of the heart. This test is the most frequently used imaging test to evaluate disease processes of the heart. It evaluates the structure, function, and hemodynamic qualities of the heart in a non invasive way. This test may be ordered by any healthcare provider but more often is ordered by the cardiologist. An ultrasound technician that is trained to do ultrasounds of the heart performs the test in many cases. A cardiologist will read the test and interpret it. There really is no preparation for this test. It takes anywhere between 45 minutes to over an hour depending on the anatomy.



There is no need to hold any medications. There is also no need to fast prior to the test. When the test begins, you will be in a room with an ultrasound technologist who will dim the lights. Some gel and a probe will be applied to the left side of the chest. There may be some mild discomfort when applying pressure on the chest with the probe. However, many individuals do not experience any pain. As stated earlier, after the test is done, you will go home and your

echocardiogram will be read by a cardiologist. Each office reports the results to the patient differently so check with the office that ordered the test to see how and when you will be notified of the results. The echocardiogram will be able to show many things about the heart. It can tell how the heart is pumping and if any of the chambers are enlarged. It can tell if the heart wall has been damaged, if there is an aneurysm of a heart wall, or if the heart wall is too thick. It can show the function of the four heart valves, if they are leaking, narrowed, or malfunctioning in any way. Fluid around the heart can also be seen during an echocardiogram. Masses such as tumors and infection to name a few can sometimes be seen on an echocardiogram. The blood vessels that are connected to the heart are also inspected during this test. (2,4). Cont..page 3

## Tip of the Month

### Increasing the Fiber in Your Diet:

1. Most adults need at least 21 grams of fiber or more per day.
2. Start the day out with a high fiber cereal with at least 5 grams or more.
3. Eat fresh fruit over canned fruit (apples, bananas, pears, oranges, and berries).
4. Choose whole grains when there is an option.
5. Eat plenty of beans and peas.
6. Don't forget your vegetables. Pack some carrots and hummus for your snack.
7. Add fiber slowly to help avoid gas and bloating. (1).



# Chicken Salad



Recipe from  
“Breaking the Salt  
Habit” by Erik  
Williams.

## Ingredients:

-3 cups boneless skinless chicken breast  
-5 Tb light mayonnaise  
-5 Tb light sour cream  
-2 Tb celery, finely chopped  
-2 Tb cucumber  
-2 Tb green onion, finely chopped  
-1\4 tsp garlic powder  
1\4 tsp basil

## Directions:

1. Boil chicken in sauce pan until done.
2. Dice or shred chicken.
3. Combine with all other ingredients in a small bowl and mix well.

This recipe does not include bread so if you decide to eat bread with the chicken salad, then make sure and check the sodium content.

## Nutrition Info

Yields 6 servings  
1 Serving = 1\2 cup

Calories: 172  
Total Fat: 5 g  
Sat Fat: <7 g  
Cholesterol: 70  
Potassium: 306mg  
Carbohydrates: 2 g  
Protein: 27g  
Fiber: <1g  
Sugar: <1g  
Sodium: 136 mg

**Quote of the Month:** “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”  
John R. Wooden

## Did you Know?

Did you know a new drug for the treatment of heart failure was approved? On July 7, 2015, the FDA approved Entresto (sacubitril/valsartan) for the treatment of heart failure. Entresto is indicated to reduce the risk of cardiovascular death and hospitalization in people with heart failure and reduced ejection fraction. Over four thousand patients have been studied on this drug for an average of 24 months. This medication is to be used in place of an ACE-inhibitor or an ARB. Common ACE-inhibitors include lisinopril, enalapril, monopril, and ramipril to name a few. Common ARBs include valsartan, losartan, irbesartan, and olmesartan to name a few. Before Entresto is started, the ACE-inhibitor or ARB must be discontinued for 36 hours.

It comes in three doses and is to be taken twice a day with or without food. Your health care provider may titrate the dose after 2-4 weeks of treatment. Please note, this drug is not for everyone. It is contraindicated in people who are pregnant, want to become pregnant, or those who are breastfeeding. It is also contraindicated in people who have had an allergic reaction to an ACE-inhibitor or ARB before. Kidney function and potassium will have to be monitored routinely with laboratory studies. Other potential side effects include low blood pressure, dizziness, and a cough. Please notify your healthcare provider if you experience any of these side effects. More information will come out as time goes on about this new drug. While it will have to be monitored closely, it might be worth it for some individuals. (3,5,6).

Because an echocardiogram is an easy, safe way to evaluate the heart, it may be ordered routinely to follow certain disease processes of the heart.

In some instances, the heart needs to be evaluated a little bit closer and a TEE or transesophageal echocardiogram will be ordered. This test is more invasive but gives a better picture because the heart can be viewed from the inside instead of from the outside of the chest. During a TEE, a small probe is passed down the esophagus (food pipe) after the throat is numbed and some light sedation is given. This test is performed by a cardiologist. A nurse and ultrasound technician will usually be present with the cardiologist. In some centers, an anesthesiologist will administer the sedation. A respiratory therapist may also be present to help monitor the breathing during sedation. The time it takes to complete a TEE may vary depending on what is being evaluated. If only a blood clot is being looked for, this may only take about 15 or 20 minutes. However if all the structures need to be thoroughly evaluated then it may be 45 minutes or more depending on the anatomy and patient. Because this is an invasive test, food is usually held 4-6 hours before the procedure. Otherwise there really is not any other preparation. After the procedure you may be asked not to drive for the rest of the day due to the sedation. Otherwise normal activities may be resumed.

To sum up, an echocardiogram is a common and safe test that is routinely completed to evaluate the heart. In some cases, a TEE may be needed to get a better look at the heart. As always, each individual is different and there may be some variations in what we have discussed. Always follow the instructions of your healthcare provider. (2,4).

