

Understanding Your Echocardiogram

What is ejection fraction?

- Ejection fraction is a measurement of how well your heart is pumping. It measures the amount of blood that leaves your heart each time it contracts.

What do the numbers mean?

- Ejection fraction is expressed as a percentage. A normal heart pumps more than half of the heart's blood volume with each beat.
- A normal ejection fraction ranges from 50-70% (For example, an ejection fraction of 60% means that 60% of the total amount of blood in the left ventricle is pumped out with each beat.)
- A low ejection fraction (<50%) can happen when the heart muscle has become damaged or weakened. This may be caused by a heart attack, problems with heart valves, long-standing high blood pressure, heart muscle diseases (cardiomyopathy), or other causes.

Other information that can be obtained by echocardiogram:

- Size and shape of the heart
- Thickness and movement of the heart wall
- Function of the heart valves
- Sizes and dimensions of the heart's chambers
- Identify blood clots, tumors, or other defects inside of the heart

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