

## What happens after the test?

Once the echocardiogram is completed you may get dressed and leave. There are no limitations to what you can do after the scan.

The images are then analysed and a comprehensive report prepared and sent to your doctor. This may take up to an hour, so you will not be given the results on the day.

### How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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# Transthoracic Echocardiography

### Patient information leaflet

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Cardiology Booking Coordinator on 01494 425902

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

## What is an Echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is a diagnostic test that uses ultrasound to take moving images of your heart. High frequency sound waves are transmitted into the body and 'echoes' are received back on to the monitor showing the internal structure of your heart. Ultrasound does not use X-rays and it can be safely performed on adults, children and babies. There is no risk to unborn babies.

Echocardiography can be helpful in a wide range of clinical situations. Common indications for outpatient Echocardiography include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Atrial Fibrillation (AF)
- Palpitations
- Heart murmur
- Assessment of heart function and heart valves
- Stroke or TIA (mini stroke)
- Breathlessness
- Blackouts
- Congenital heart disease (some people are born with abnormal valves or connections in the heart).

## What preparation will I need?

You may eat and drink as normal before the test. Please continue with your regular medication. Wear loose and comfortable clothing and dress so that you can easily remove all clothing from the waist up.

It is best to avoid using creams or lotions on your chest as these may interfere with our monitoring systems.

## What does the procedure involve?

The test will take place in a darkened room. You will be asked to remove all clothing from the waist up. Female patients will be offered a gown, which should be left open at the front.

You will be asked to lie on your left side on a special scanning couch. Electrodes will be placed on your chest so we can monitor your heart during the scan. Gel will be applied to your chest and a small probe moved over your skin to view your heart from different angles. During the scan you will hear sounds coming from the machine that represent blood flow through your heart.

Sometimes it is necessary to press quite hard to get a clear image. This may be a little uncomfortable at times.

The echocardiogram will take approximately 30-40 minutes to perform, although the length of time does depend on the complexity of the case.

In some cases it may be necessary to give you an injection during the scan to help us see the movement of blood.

We always try very hard to keep to our appointment times, however emergencies may delay the start of your test.