

Echocardiography

Information for patients

Your doctor has recommended a test called an echocardiogram. Please take some time to read this information sheet and discuss any questions or concerns you may have with a medical professional.

What is an echocardiogram?

Echocardiography (echo) uses ultrasound waves to create detailed images of your heart. Moving images of your heart are used to assess your heart function. There are four chambers of the heart and four heart valves which will be assessed during the scan.

You should take all your medications as usual. Please eat and drink as normal.

During the procedure:

First you will be taken into a darkened room. The person performing the test is called a sonographer. They are usually **not** a doctor and this means that some questions you may have about the result may have to wait until you see the doctor in clinic.

You will be asked to undress from the waist up (you will be offered a hospital gown) and to lie on a couch. Several sensor stickers (electrodes) will be placed on your chest so that we can monitor the heart tracing.

You will be asked to lie back slightly onto your left-hand side for the procedure, which takes approximately 30-40 minutes. Let a member of staff know if this may be difficult for you.

An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel is placed on the centre of your chest and will be moved into different positions- beneath the left breast, beneath the rib cage and to the base of your neck. This provides images of your heart from a number of different angles which are then recorded.

During the echocardiogram you will hear sounds coming from the machine which represent blood flow through the heart.

Chaperone

If you need a chaperone, you may bring a friend or relative. Alternatively, the hospital may provide a chaperone at your request.

What happens next?

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

Contacting us about your appointment

If you have any questions about your appointment, or need to cancel or change it, please contact the department in advance using the telephone number on your appointment letter.

Public transport and travel information

Bus details available from:

Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk

Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com

Train details available from:

National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient transport

Patient transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Please telephone 0300 123 1236 (calls will be charged at local rate) up to 28 days in advance to book. Make sure you have your CHI number when booking. The CHI number can be found on your appointment letter. Hard of hearing or speech impaired please use Text Relay: 18001 0300123 1236 (calls charged at local rates). To cancel patient transport please call 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24hr answer service).

Interpretation and translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing inpatient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.