

Contrast Echocardiogram

Procedure information for patients

What is it?

An echocardiogram or “echo” is a scan that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to produce pictures of the heart. The test is painless and does not use radioactivity.

During a contrast echo you will be injected with a contrast agent, which improves the quality of the images that are being recorded.

Why is it being done?

If your doctor has decided that you need an echocardiogram, but the picture quality is not very good, a contrast agent can be used to help improve the images.

What does it involve?

You will be taken into a darkened room. One or two people will usually be present. The person performing the test is called a Sonographer, who may be male or female. The Sonographer will usually **not** be a doctor. This means that some questions you may have about the result may have to wait until you see your doctor in clinic.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and asked to put on a gown that should be left open to the front. You will be asked to lie on the couch on your left hand side.

Sensor stickers (electrodes) will be connected to your chest and connected to the machine. These will be used to monitor your heart rate during the test. A drip will be placed in your arm.

The Sonographer will record a number of pictures of your heart. Whilst this is happening, a contrast agent will be injected into the drip to improve the quality of the images.

The echo will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete.

Are there any special precautions that I need to take before the echo?

No, you can take all your medication as normal.

At the end of your echocardiogram

Once the echo is complete you can get dressed and leave. There are no limitations to what you can do after the scan. For example- you can drive after the scan.

Are there any risks to having a contrast echo?

There is an extremely small risk (less than 1 in 10,000) of developing an allergic reaction to the contrast agent used. If you have had allergic reactions to any medicines before, please inform us before starting the test.

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. Telephone **0300 123 1236** *calls charged at local rate up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI number available (find this on your appointment letter).

Hard of hearing or speech impaired? Use text relay: **18001-0300 123 1236*** (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hr 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 in patient, 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.