

Transthoracic Echocardiogram (TTE) and Ambulatory Electrocardiography (ECG)

Information for patients

Your doctor has recommended that you come for an **echocardiogram (TTE)** test and an **electrocardiography (ECG)** test to monitor your heart.

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 4 chambers of the heart and 4 heart valves which be assessed during the scan.

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

During the test:

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 ECG stickers will be placed on your chest and arms 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. Some people may find this uncomfortable. If needed, you can ask the sonographer to pause the test for a couple of minutes.

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

What happens next?

Once the echocardiogram is complete you can get dressed and return to the waiting room until you are called for your ECG.

There are no limitations to what you can do after the scan.

What is ambulatory ECG monitoring?

An ambulatory ECG monitor is a small lightweight device that measures your heart rate and rhythm, as you go about your normal daily routine. The monitor can be worn for between 24 hours and seven days – how long you will wear the monitor will be decided by the doctor who referred you, and this will be clear on your appointment letter.

What will my appointment involve?

The monitor will be fitted during an outpatient appointment and will take approximately 15 minutes. Three small stickers (electrodes) are attached to your chest to which the monitor and leads are connected. If possible, please wear separate tops and bottoms to allow the physiologist to attach the monitor to you easily. The monitor is discreet and approximately the size of a small mobile phone and is often worn on a lanyard around your neck, though it may be possible, depending on the type of monitor for it to be worn on the waistband, belt or placed in the pocket.

What should I do while I am wearing my monitor?

It is expected that you carry out any activities you do during a 'typical' day. If you are to have monitoring for more than 48 hours the member of staff will provide you with spare stickers (electrodes) and show you how remove/reattach the monitor so that you are able to have a shower/bath. It is important that the monitor never gets wet. It is important that you record the time (as displayed on the monitor) of any symptoms onto the diary sheet provided, including your activity.

Returning your monitor

It is very important that you return your monitor at the end of the monitoring period – the member of staff fitting it will clearly tell you when you need to return it. You will be asked to sign a form to state that you understand and agree to returning the monitor at the end of your monitoring. The monitor needs to be returned so that we can analyse your recording and provide the results to your healthcare team, and also so that we can use the monitor for other patients that are on the waiting list. A close friend, family member or neighbour can return the monitor on your behalf if needed.

Do you need to change your appointment or ask a question?

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 are available from Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 or www.lothianbuses.co.uk, Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com.

Train details available from the National Enquires on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk.