

Contrast Echocardiogram Test

Information and advice for patients

Cardiology Diagnostics

Welcome to the Cardiology Diagnostics Department where we perform a wide range of cardiac investigations. Our staff aim to provide a high quality service to meet your needs and welcome any suggestions for improvements. We hope you find this leaflet helpful and look forward to seeing you.

What is a Contrast Echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of the heart that provides a moving picture on a monitor. It is useful for looking at the overall function, structure and size of your heart, and for examining in greater detail, the valves and chambers of your heart. It is a very useful tool for investigating various suspected or known heart conditions.

During a contrast echocardiogram a special dye will be injected into your hand or arm to improve the quality of the images that are being recorded.

What is the benefit of the test?

The contrast injected will improve the quality of images recorded and also allow us to make a more accurate assessment of your heart function.

What are the risks of the test?

There is an extremely small risk (less than 1 in 10,000) of developing a severe allergic reaction to the contrast agent used. Please be assured that in the unlikely event of an adverse reaction to contrast, staff are trained to deal with the event.

If you have any allergies, please inform us before starting the test.

What are the risks of not having the test?

If you choose not to have the contrast echocardiogram this may delay your doctor finding out what is causing your symptoms and starting treatment.

Are there any alternative tests?

Any possibility of alternative tests would have to be discussed with your consultant.

Preparing for the test

- You can take all of your medication, eat and drink as normal
- If possible do not apply any creams, oils or ointments on the day of the test
- Please allow up to one hour for your appointment

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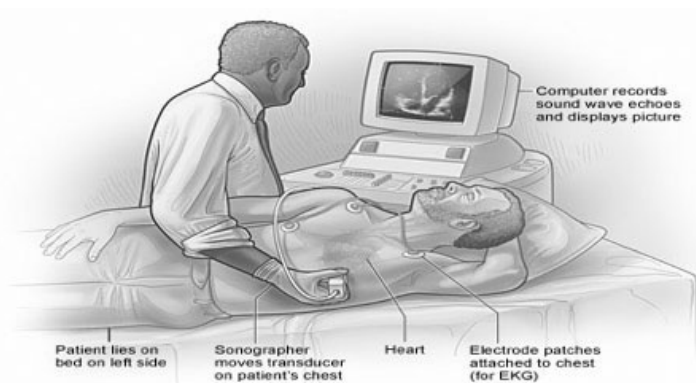
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During the test

You will be taken into a darkened room. Two people will usually be present they could be specially trained echocardiographers and/or a doctor. (They could be either male or female members of staff).

You will be asked to undress to the waist and put on a gown to maintain your dignity. A special needle called a cannula will be inserted into one of the veins in your hand or arm. You will then be asked to lie on a couch on your left hand side and three ECG wires will be attached to your upper body, so your heart rhythm can be monitored during the scan. Contrast agent will be injected into the cannula and pictures of your heart will be taken whilst the contrast flows through it, by placing the ultrasound probe with gel onto your chest area.



Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

What do I feel during the test?

You will feel a sharp scratch when the cannula is inserted and possibly a cold sensation in your arm as the contrast is injected. You may also feel some discomfort when the echocardiographer applies pressure on your chest area with the ultrasound probe.

After the test

Once the scan is complete, the cannula will be removed. If you are taking blood thinning medication, you may bleed or bruise more easily following this. You will be given some tissue to remove the gel and you can then get dressed. Sometimes you may be asked to wait, whilst the images are reviewed by a doctor.

When will I get the results?

The images will be reviewed and reported on by an echocardiographer within 48 hours. The report will then be forwarded to the requesting consultant, who will write to you and your GP.

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Contact details

You will be able to ask any questions or tell us any concerns before the test is carried out, but if you would like to contact us before your appointment please call us on:

Birmingham Treatment Centre Telephone: 0121 507 6295

Sandwell General Hospital Telephone: 0121 507 3512

Lines open: 9am till 4pm Monday to Friday

Suggestions

In order to continually improve our service we welcome your feedback and suggestions. We would be grateful if you would complete our Friends and Family survey at the end of your appointment.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about the treatment you have received, please ask at reception to see the Head of Department. Alternatively you can contact, Informal Concern or the complaints department.

Informal Concern

Telephone: 0121 507 5836

Lines open: 10am till 4pm Monday to Friday

Email: swb-tr.pals@nhs.net

Complaints

Telephone: 0121 507 4080 or 0121 507 5892 or 0121 507 6440

Lines open: 10am till 4pm Monday to Friday

Email: swbh.complaints@nhs.net

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites www.swbh.nhs.uk, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- British Society of Echocardiography. Available at: www.bsecho.org (Accessed: 12 November 2019).
- National Health Service (2018) Echocardiogram. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/echocardiogram/> (Accessed: 8 November 2019).



Adult Services Only

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British Society
of Echocardiography
Accredited Department

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