

Echocardiogram Test

Information and advice for patients

Cardiology Diagnostics

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 an 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.

What is the benefit of the test?

This test allows your doctor to see whether there are any structural or functional abnormalities in your heart. It is often done to evaluate heart murmurs or symptoms that may be present with heart problems such as palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness or blackouts. You may alternatively be having your test as part of a screening process.

What are the risks of the test?

There are no risks or side effects, as this procedure does not involve any radiation and ultrasound waves are harmless.

What are the risks of not having the test?

If you choose not to have the 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

Echocardiogram Test

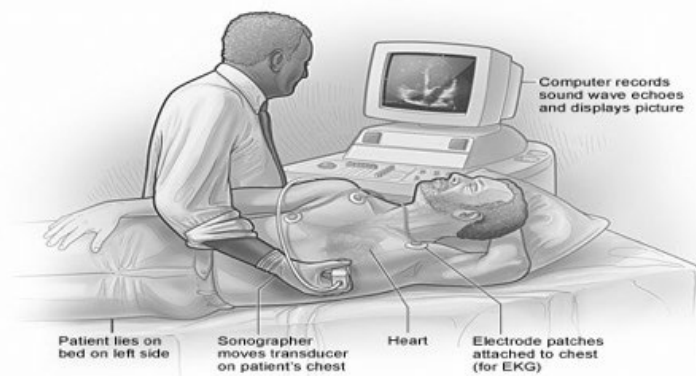
Information and advice for patients

Cardiology Diagnostics

During the test

You will be taken into a darkened room. Performing your test will be a specially trained echocardiographer (this could be a male or female member of staff). You will be asked to undress to the waist and put on a gown to maintain your dignity. 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.

Gel will be squeezed onto the ultrasound probe and placed on your chest, stomach, and neck areas. Lots of images will be taken and at times you may hear some “whooshing” noises, which represent blood flow through the heart.



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 may feel some discomfort when the echocardiographer applies pressure on your chest area with the ultrasound probe.

After the test

Once the scan is complete 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.

Echocardiogram Test

Information and advice for patients

Cardiology Diagnostics

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 website www.swbh.nhs.uk, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Echocardiogram Test

Information and advice for patients

Cardiology Diagnostics

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National Health Service (2018) Echocardiogram.

Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/echocardiogram/> (Accessed: 23 February 2023).

Wharton, G., Steeds, R., et al. (2015). A minimum dataset for a standard adult transthoracic echocardiogram: a guideline protocol from the British Society of Echocardiography. *Echo research and practice*, 2(1), G9-G24.

Wheeler, R., Steeds, R., et al. (2015). A minimum dataset for a standard transoesophageal echocardiogram: a guideline protocol from the British Society of Echocardiography. *Echo Research and Practice*, 2(4), G29.



Adult Services Only

Accreditation Number: 10488



If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email swbh.library@nhs.net.



A Teaching Trust of The University of Birmingham
Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals

© Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

ML6052

Issue Date: February 2023

Review Date: February 2026