

Echocardiography



Information for patients

Diagnostic Cardiology Unit



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SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram or 'echo' is a scan that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to produce pictures of the heart. The test is relatively painless and without any side effects.

It does not use radiation, nor does it involve being in confined spaces.

An echo gives your doctor information about how effectively your heart pumps and whether the heart valves are working properly.

How long will it take?

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

What happens during an echocardiogram?

The test will take place in a private room with low lighting. You will be required to remove all clothing from the waist up and offered a gown / cape. Stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the machine to monitor your heart rate during the test. During the scan you will then be asked to lie on your left side on a couch. This position allows the sonographer to obtain good images of the heart. An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel will be applied to the left side of your chest and moved over the skin. Images will also be taken from your stomach or neck to view the heart from different angles. During the echocardiogram you will hear sounds coming from the machine, which represent blood flow through the heart.

What do I need to do to prepare?

No preparation is required prior to attending. You can take all your medication as normal. You can eat and drink as normal.

Who will perform my echocardiogram?

Your echo will be performed by a cardiac physiologist or doctor who has been specially trained to perform the investigation. The cardiac physiologist may be male or female. If you would prefer a cardiac physiologist of the same gender as yourself please contact the department prior to your appointment.

In addition, if you would like a chaperone for your investigation please contact the department prior to your appointment. If you prefer, you can bring a family member or friend as an informal chaperone. Once inside the procedure room the cardiac physiologist will ask your informal chaperone their relationship to you and their name so this can be documented on the test information in line with Trust policy.

Your scan may be performed by a trainee sonographer who may need to consult with a supervisor. Therefore do not be alarmed if the sonographer brings another senior sonographer into the room to review the scan or to perform further images.

Consent

You will be asked to verbally consent to the test prior to the scan. However, you can withdraw your consent at any point before or during the test.

How will I get my results?

The result will be sent to your GP or hospital consultant depending on who has requested the test. They are responsible for explaining the test results to you. Unfortunately the cardiac physiologist is unable to give you the results at the time of the investigation. This means that some questions you may have about the result may have to wait until you see your doctor in clinic.

Will I be seen by a doctor?

No, you will not normally be seen by a doctor. However, if a significant abnormality is detected you may be asked to see a doctor while you are at the hospital.

Where can I find out more information?

If you would like more information you can contact the department on **0114 271 4315** and they will be happy to answer any question you may have.

There are also other organisations that are available to help and inform people about cardiac conditions. These include:

British Heart Foundation

- 0300 330 3322
- www.bhf.org.uk

Arrhythmia Alliance

- 01789 450787
- www.hearhythmalliance.org/aa/uk/



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