

Patient Information

Contrast Echocardiogram

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Your Doctor has decided that you should have a Contrast Echocardiogram

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 a Contrast agent is injected 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 or Cardiac Physiologist, 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 be asked to lie on a couch on your left hand side.

♥ Stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the machine. These will be used to monitor your heart rate during the test. A cannula will be placed in your arm.

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

The images will be reviewed by the cardiac physiologist or doctor and a report will be forwarded to the doctor who requested the echo. The images with the report will then be stored on a database which is only accessed by selected NHS personnel responsible for your care.

Please note: If you do not wish to have your information stored on the database the only way we can comply with this request is not to perform the echo

♥ The echocardiogram will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

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

♥ No. You can take all your medication as normal. You can eat and drink as normal.

At the end of your echocardiogram

♥ Once the echocardiogram is complete you can get dressed and leave. There are no limitations to what you can do after the scan, for example, you may drive.

Are there any risks in having the 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.**

There is a small risk of bruising or infection from the placement of the IV line

This document has been adapted from the British Society of Echocardiography
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Notes:

**This leaflet is also available in large
print Contact: Cardiology Department
South West Cardiothoracic Centre
Tel: 01752 431663**

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