

## Patient Information

# Bubble Contrast Echocardiogram

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Your Doctor has decided that you should have a Bubble 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 Bubble Contrast Echo a Contrast agent (sterile salt water mixed with air) is injected which improves the quality of the images and allows the doctor to watch the bubbles travel through the heart chambers.

### **Why is it being done?**

♥ A Contrast Echo is used to help diagnose if you have any extra connections in the heart chambers.

### **What does it involve?**

♥ You will be taken into a darkened room. Two people will usually be present. The person performing the test is called a Sonographer / Cardiac Physiologist, who may be male or female. There will also be a doctor present who will inject the bubbles.

♥ 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, the bubbles will be injected by the doctor, you may be asked to cough and sniff whilst the images are being recorded.

This process maybe repeated up to six times. 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 45 minutes to an hour 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 Bubble Contrast Echo?**

♥ There are no known risks from having a bubble contrast echo. 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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