

Echocardiogram

An information guide



Echocardiogram

Your Doctor has decided that you should have an Echocardiogram

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 without side effects and does not use radioactivity.

Why is it being done?

An echo gives your Doctor information about how well the heart pumps and whether your heart valves are working properly. It is not able to tell your Doctor whether you have angina.

What does it involve?

The person performing the test (the 'Sonographer') may be male or female, and not usually a doctor. If you would prefer a sonographer of the same gender please let us know before you attend.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and put on a gown that should be left open to the front. You will be asked to lie on a couch on your left hand side, the sonographer may also be sitting on the same couch while performing the scan. If you require a chaperone, you may bring a friend or relative.

Stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the machine to monitor your heart rate. The lights will be dimmed during the test.

An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel (which may be cold), is placed on the chest. Images of the heart are taken from different positions – beneath the left breast, beneath the rib cage and to the base of your neck. The pressure from this probe may be mildly uncomfortable, but not painful.

During the echo you will hear sounds coming from the machine, which represent blood flow through the heart.

The echo will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete. Delays are possible during busy periods.

We take pride in being an echo training centre, and thus a trainee sonographer may perform the scan under close supervision of a senior technician. Here the examination may take up to 60 minutes, but if you would not like to be scanned by a trainee please let us know before you attend.

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.

Following the examination a report will be sent to the referring doctor. No results will be given on the day.

Should you require any further information please contact the Cardiorespiratory Department on: 0161 656 1276

You can also find further information at www.bhf.org.uk

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897


For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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