



UNDERSTANDING YOUR ECHOCARDIOGRAM

This guide will tell you about the procedure and help you prepare for the appointment.

What is an Echocardiogram?

An Echocardiogram, also known as an Echo, is an ultrasound scan of the heart which is used to assess both its structure and function and is carried out by specially trained Cardiac Physiologists. An Echo uses ultrasound waves to produce images of the heart on a screen; the same technology used for performing pregnancy scans on unborn babies. The Echo Report produced by the Cardiac Physiologist allows your doctor to evaluate and monitor your heart's health.

Why am I having an Echo?

Your Doctor may have requested you have an echo for any of the following reasons:

- If you are breathless or complain of certain symptoms during exertion
- To look for the cause of a heart murmur
- To check the size of the heart chambers
- To check for fluid around the heart
- To check that the muscles of the heart are the right thickness and are pumping correctly

Are there any side effects?

No – an echocardiogram is generally painless and harmless. However, some patients may find it slightly uncomfortable due to the positioning of the probe on the chest.

Before your Appointment

You do not need to make any special preparations for your echocardiogram. You may eat and drink normally before and after the test.

Continue to take your usual medication but do bring a list as the Physiologist may need to know what medication you are taking. Some medications may affect the normal rhythm of the heart and our clinicians need to be aware of this when looking at your results.

Please ensure that you have your height and weight measurements available for your appointment.

If you have any questions or need advice, please contact us on **0333 202 3186**.

Additional support

If you need help because you speak a different language, or you would like a friend, relative or carer to come with you, please let us know when you book your appointment.

If you need us to provide a chaperone, or require a **clinician of a particular gender**, please call us to arrange a suitable appointment.



Covid related precautions

Please see the location map for required arrival instructions for your appointment.

All patients and visitors attending InHealth appointments are required to wear a face covering.

Where possible please come alone to your appointment, as healthcare premises will not have facilities for relatives or friends.

When you arrive one of our staff will escort you into the Echo room and explain the procedure to you. You will be asked to remove your clothing from the waist up and women will be offered a paper cover to wear throughout the procedure.

The Examination

Your examination will be performed with you lying on a couch on your left-hand side. The Cardiac Physiologist will assist you in getting onto the couch if you need help.

The Cardiac Physiologist will then attach 3 self-adhesive electrodes to your chest and apply ultrasound gel to a device called a transducer. This sends and receives the harmless ultrasound waves. The gel allows the ultrasound beam to travel through your chest wall so that it is possible to see the heart.

The transducer will be pressed against your skin with a moderate pressure to facilitate the transmission of the ultrasound waves. This can be uncomfortable but should not be painful.

The Cardiac Physiologist will acquire ultrasound images and audio recordings by moving the transducer around the chest, stomach and neck. During recording you may be asked to change position or hold your breath so that the best quality images can be obtained.

How long will it take?

An echocardiogram will usually take between 15 and 30 minutes. In some circumstances, a more detailed scan may be needed which may take up to 45 minutes.

When will I get the results?

The Doctor who requested your echocardiogram will receive the report and images of your echo within 5 working days. Please note that the Physiologist with you on the day will be unable to discuss your results with you. Please telephone your surgery to confirm that the Doctor has received your results before arranging an appointment, unless the Doctor has made different arrangements with you.

Giving your consent for the procedure

The information in this leaflet gives you an idea of what is involved in your echocardiogram. Before any medical procedure can be performed, the healthcare professional carrying out the procedure will let you know what to expect. It is your right to be given all the information you need to make an informed choice about whether you want to go through with the procedure or not. Please feel free to ask any questions.

You only need to agree to this examination verbally.

Complaints Procedure

We take pride in the standard of service which we offer at InHealth. If you do have reason to complain, however, we take your comments seriously and a full complaints procedure is available upon request. Please ask a member of staff at the Centre who will be able to provide you with a copy.

Data Protection

InHealth will keep the information you provide for internal purposes. We may also share the information you provide, but from which you cannot be identified, with those responsible for meeting your treatment or expenses (or their agents) for research, statistical, educational, administrative or contractual purposes (for example, audit and continuous improvement). This will include the National Health Service if you are an NHS patient.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the most recent Healthcare Commission report, please address your request to the Unit Manager.

If you have any comments or suggestions about our patient information leaflet, please also direct them to the Unit Manager.

This patient information leaflet is reviewed annually and patient observations are welcomed as part of that process. Braille, audio CD and large print versions of this leaflet are available on request.

About InHealth

InHealth is a longstanding provider of expert diagnostic solutions and healthcare services for patients throughout the UK. For over 25 years we've worked in collaboration with the NHS, patients and private providers to respond to the changing healthcare environment to deliver clinical and operational excellence.

InHealth | Beechwood Hall | Kingsmead Road
High Wycombe | Bucks | HP11 1JL

T: 01494 560000 | F: 01494 560056

info@inhealthgroup.com

www.inhealthgroup.com