

# Echocardiography

## (Cardiac Ultrasound)

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**Clinical Investigation Unit**

**Patient Information Leaflet**

## **What is an Echocardiogram?**

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of your heart.

Detailed information about the chambers of the heart and the blood flow through the valves is obtained using high frequency sound waves.

The scan is performed by a trained specialist called a cardiac (heart) physiologist.

## **Are there any risks or side effects?**

A standard echocardiogram is a simple, painless and safe procedure. There are no side effects from the scan, although the lubricating gel may feel cold and you may experience some minor discomfort when the electrodes are removed from your skin at the end of the test.

Unlike some other tests and scans, such as X-rays and computerised tomography (CT) scans, no radiation is used during an echocardiogram.

## **What will happen on the day?**

- You will be asked to undress to the waist. Women will be offered a gown to wear - please be advised that "separates" are a more practical option than a dress.
- You will be asked to lie on a couch. Images are often best obtained with the patient lying on their left side.
- Lighting is reduced to enhance the images on the screen.
- ECG electrodes (to record your heart rhythm) will be attached to your chest and ultrasound gel applied.
- The physiologist will move a probe, similar to a microphone, over your chest by hand.

- From time to time during the procedure you will hear sounds from the machine which relate to the flow of blood through your heart.
- The test is completely painless.

The procedure may take 20 to 40 minutes to complete and you will be able to leave as soon as the scan is completed.

The results of the test will not be given to you on the day. The report will be sent either to your GP via the cardiologist (heart specialist), or directly to the hospital consultant who requested the investigation.

**Please note.** Your test may be performed by a cardiac physiologist or by a doctor. If you would like to have a chaperone, one can be provided on the day. Alternatively you are welcome to bring a friend or family member with you.

The physiologist may ask your permission for a trainee physiologist or doctor to take part in the procedure for training purposes.

## **Clinical Investigation Unit**

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If you require a translator, please contact the department and one can be arranged for you.

If you have reduced or limited mobility, or require assistance in transferring to an examination couch, please contact the department prior to your investigation.

If you require transport, please contact 08000 323240

For further information regarding other cardiac investigations please visit:

**bhf.org.uk** or **Heart Helpline** Tel: 0300 330 3311

Heart Information booklets are available in the department.

## Leaflet Details

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## **Other formats**

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : 01539 795497.

## **Travelling to our hospitals**

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): 01539 795497.

## **Useful Contact Details**

NHS 111 (for 24 hour urgent health advice): telephone 111.

## **Your Information**

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.UHMB.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01539 795497.

## **Evidence**

Details of the evidence used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer at 01524 512476.

## **Feedback**

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS on 01539 795497.

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. You can contact the NHS North Lancashire Stop Smoking services on the number below:

NHS Quit Squad - **0800 328 6297**

If you live in Cumbria, please call **0300 013 3000** to find a local pharmacy who are offers 1-2-1 support and nicotine replacement therapy.

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