

Patient Information leaflet

## Echocardiogram

Your doctor has decided that you should have an echocardiogram. The information below has been provided by the British Society of Echocardiography.

### 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 without side effects. It does not use radioactivity.

### Why is it being done?

An echocardiogram gives your doctor information about how well the heart is pumping and whether your heart valves are working properly. It does not enable your doctor to see whether you have angina.

## What does it involve?

You will be taken into a darkened room. The person performing the test is called a sonographer, 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 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. If you require a chaperone, you may bring a friend or relative. Alternatively, the hospital may provide a chaperone at your request.

Small stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the scanning machine. These will be used to monitor your heart rate during the test.

An ultrasound probe, covered by a small amount of gel, is placed gently on the centre of your chest and will be moved to different positions – beneath the left breast, beneath the rib cage and to the base of your neck. This provides images of your heart from a number of different angles which are then recorded.

The echocardiogram will take approximately 20-30 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 the 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.

## Contact Details

This information is also available in a large font format on our website:  
[www.dhcclinical.co.uk/patient-information](http://www.dhcclinical.co.uk/patient-information)

If you require additional help or have other accessibility needs, please contact:

01306 735 459

If you have any concerns or queries about the monitor when wearing it, you can call our Nursing Team on:

01306 735 477

**[www.dhcclinical.co.uk](http://www.dhcclinical.co.uk)**

**If you think it is a medical emergency,  
DIAL 999**