

Patient Information Sheet Cardiac Ultrasound (Echocardiogram)

What is an echocardiogram?

This is a painless cardiac ultrasound test which shows how the heart beats and pumps blood. The test provides information about the direction and speed of the blood that flows through the heart. It tells your Health Care Provider how large the heart is, how well it is working, and if the valves are okay.

What special instructions do I need to follow to be ready for my ultrasound examination?

There are no special instructions to be followed to prepare for this test.

If you are unable to keep your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible. Should you be admitted to hospital, please inform your physician about your appointment.

Please do not use perfume or other scented products on the day of your study.

Who will be performing my examination?

A specially-trained, Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (Ultrasound) will perform the examination.

What will happen to me during my examination?

When you arrive in the Diagnostic Imaging Department, you will be taken to the ultrasound room. The sonographer will explain the procedure and answer any questions you might have. You will be asked to remove all upper body clothing and to put on a gown with the opening in the front. You will be asked to lie down on an imaging stretcher.

Three electrodes will be attached to your chest. Once you are lying on your left side, the sonographer will place some gel on a small plastic probe and will position on the left side of your chest.

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Pictures of the heart are taken from several different locations on the chest: from the abdomen looking up and from the neck area looking down at the major vessels coming from the heart. These images and measurements are kept as part of your permanent digital patient record.

Should I expect any after effects as a result of my examination?

Echocardiography is very safe. There are no known risks for using ultrasound.

You may immediately eat, drink and perform normal activities.

When will I know the results?

Your Health Care Provider will usually have a written report from the Radiologist within one week of your examination. You should obtain the results from your own Health Care Provider. If there is any urgency, your Health Care Provider is more than welcome to contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department by telephone.

If you have any other questions or concerns that have not been answered here, please feel free to ask the Diagnostic Imaging staff involved in your examination