

contrast dye. This makes certain tissues and blood vessels show up more clearly and in greater detail.

As the MRI scanner produces strong magnetic fields, it is important to remove any metal objects from your body, including all jewellery and hearing aids. If you have any metal implants, you may not be able to have an MRI scan and we would need to check. Some pacemakers are also not MRI compatible; your pacing clinic will be able to advise you whether yours is.

## Computerised Tomography (CT) scan

A CT scan (or CAT scan) uses X-rays to produce detailed images of the inside of your body. You will be asked to lie on a table within the scanner which is a large ring that spins round very quickly. You will be asked to lie very still during the test and to hold your breath several times. You may also need to have a dye injected into your arm to improve the quality of the pictures.

## Contact details

If you are unable to make an appointment, please contact the appropriate department to rearrange it.

### Cardiology

Tel: 0121 371 2550

### Computerised Tomography (CT)

Tel: 0121 371 2360

### Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Tel: 0121 371 2365

### ACHD Clinical Nurse Specialists

Tel: 07768 801095

Email: [achdnurses@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:achdnurses@uhb.nhs.uk)



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit [www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm) or call 0121 371 4323.

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As a patient in the Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic, your doctors may ask for you to have one or more tests to gain further information regarding your heart. The commonest tests that we arrange are described below.

If you have any concerns or questions about a test you are due to have, it is important to speak to your team about this.

## Electrocardiogram (ECG)

An ECG is a simple, pain free test that records the rhythm and electrical activity of your heart. It takes approximately 5 minutes to complete and will require 10 small stickers, or electrodes to be placed across your chest, arms and legs. These are then connected to an ECG recording machine which picks up the electrical signals that make your heart beat. This electrical activity is recorded and printed onto paper which your medical professional will be able to interpret.

We always do an ECG at your first clinic appointment with us and you will be given a copy of the results to keep with you.

## Echocardiogram

An echocardiogram (or echo) is an ultrasound scan of the heart. It is used to assess the structure and function of your heart and to look in detail at your heart valves. It is a non-invasive procedure and entirely safe.

During the test you will be asked to undress down to the waist and a technician will apply a cold jelly to your chest. The technician will then hold a device resembling a computer mouse against your chest. They will move it around to get pictures of all parts of your heart. During the test you may hear some “whooshing” noises which are normal. This test will take up to 30 minutes to complete.

## Exercise test

An exercise test (CPEX) involves walking on a treadmill whilst wearing a special mask that measures the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your breath. The treadmill starts off very slowly but gets a bit quicker and a bit steeper every minute. Your ECG (electrical activity of the heart) and pulse will be recorded throughout the test and the technician will check your blood pressure every 3 minutes. This test gives your doctors information regarding your general fitness and also if your fitness is limited due to your heart. You will be encouraged to keep going as long as you can but it is important to let the technician know if you have any chest pain or dizziness.

## 24 hour Tape / ECG

A 24 hour tape monitors your heart rate and rhythm when you are doing your normal daily activities away from the hospital setting. Three sticky pads are placed on your chest and connected to a lightweight recorder by 3 leads. The

recorder is then hung loosely around your neck in a small pouch to keep it secure. You then continue your daily activities over the next 24 hours. After returning the monitor the results are analysed by a technician ready for your follow up appointment with your doctor. Sometimes we will ask for longer than 24 hours.

## 24 Hour blood pressure monitor

If your blood pressure is high in clinic we may request a 24 hour blood pressure monitor to see if it is always high or if you suffer from “white coat hypertension” (when high blood pressure occurs in a medical setting). A cuff is fitted around your upper arm and is attached to a small machine that you can attach to your belt. The cuff will inflate at regular intervals throughout the day and night. An average blood pressure over this period is then calculated.

## Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

Magnetic resonance imaging (or MRI) is a type of scan that uses strong magnetic fields to produce detailed pictures of the inside of your body. It is a painless and safe procedure during which you lie inside a tube shaped scanner. An MRI scan can take up to 1 hour and you will be asked to hold your breath several times during it. Some MRI scans involve having an injection of a