

Your doctor has decided that they would like you to have an echocardiogram

What is it?

An echocardiogram is a scan that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to produce pictures of the heart. The test is painless and without side effects.

Why do I need it?

The test gives the doctor information about how well your heart is functioning and about the blood flow through your heart and heart valves.

How is it done?

You will be taken into the echo room by a cardiac physiologist or doctor who will be doing your scan. You will be asked to undress to the waist (a gown will be provided) and to lie on a couch on your left side. Sticky electrodes will be attached to your chest and connected to the echo machine. These will monitor your heart rate during the test.

An ultrasound probe and a small amount of gel are gently placed on your chest and will be moved to different positions. Please do not be afraid to inform the operator if you feel any discomfort from the probe pressing on your chest.

The probe will collect images from your heart and will be displayed on the echo machine then recorded digitally.

During the scan you will hear sounds coming from the machine, which represent blood flow through the heart.

The scan will take approximately 20–40 minutes to complete.

Medications/tablets

You can take all your medication as normal, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

At the end of your scan

Once the scan is complete you can get dressed and you will be free to leave. A report of the echocardiogram will be sent to the doctor who requested the echocardiogram.

If you would like a chaperone during your procedure, please call the department and request this in advance. The department will arrange this on your request, as it cannot be a friend or relative, although they may be present if you prefer.

If you are more than 10 minutes late for your appointment we may not be able to perform the scan, it will then have to be rescheduled to another date.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk