



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Having an echocardiogram

Cardiology

Patient information

## What is this information about?

This information is about having an echocardiogram. It tells you what an echocardiogram is for, and what happens during and after an echocardiogram, including getting your results.

## Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your doctor has referred you to have an echocardiogram. The echocardiogram checks if your heart is working properly. It can also check if you have some heart conditions.

## What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is a cardiac ultrasound, also called an echo.

It is an ultrasound scan that uses sound waves to create images of the heart, and information about how the heart works. It provides detailed information about the different parts of the heart and their blood flow. This helps to see how well your heart is working.

## Why do I need an echocardiogram?

Echocardiograms are used to see if you have some heart conditions. These include:

- heart valve diseases.
- congenital heart defects (heart defects that you were born with).
- heart muscle abnormalities (something isn't right with your heart muscle).

It also checks your overall heart function. Echocardiograms are useful tests that help us to diagnose and keep an eye on any problems with your heart.

## **What happens during an echocardiogram?**

You will lie on your left side on a bed while a cardiac physiologist scans your chest. They will put gel on it first.

A probe is then placed on different areas of your chest to capture images of your heart.

The cardiac physiologist may ask you to change positions or hold your breath briefly. This will help them to get better images.

## **Do I need to undress for the appointment?**

Yes. You will need to undress from the waist up. This allows the probe to be placed properly on your chest.

You will be given a hospital gown to wear so that you feel comfortable.

## **Can I bring someone with me?**

Depending on the type of echocardiogram, you might be able to bring someone with you.

If you are having a standard echocardiogram, you will be able to bring one person with you, if you want to.

If you are having a specialised test, you will not be able to have someone in the room during the test, but they can attend the appointment and wait in the waiting room.

If you need more information, please contact the booking team.

## **Do I need to make any other preparations?**

Usually, you do not have to make any special preparations for an echocardiogram.

If you are going to have a special type of echocardiogram, such as a stress echocardiogram, your doctor may give you extra instructions. This might include fasting (not eating) or avoiding certain medicines before the test.

## What happens after the Echocardiogram?

Once the echocardiogram is completed, the recorded images are analysed by a Cardiac Physiologist. They will write a report about what they see and send to the requesting doctor.

Your doctor will discuss the results with you during a follow-up appointment. They may recommend further testing or treatment.

## When will I receive my results?

The report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the echocardiogram. They will contact you to discuss the results.

If you have any enquiries about your results please contact the department where the referral was originally made.

## Who can I contact for further information and advice about my appointment?

**You can contact the booking team on:**

**01273 696955 Ext. 63619.**

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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