

# Echocardiogram



## What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is a painless scan of the heart using high frequency sound waves to obtain pictures of the heart in a non-invasive manner. The pictures are obtained by placing a jelly covered transducer on various positions of the left side of your chest whilst acquiring information on the ultrasound machine. The consultant will ask you to undress from the waist upwards.

## Why would you have an echocardiogram?

There are many reasons why your doctor may ask for you to have an echocardiogram. These would include palpitations, irregular heart rhythm, having a heart murmur, after a heart attack, before having chemotherapy or surgery, following a stroke and angina.



## What equipment do we use?

Your heart rate will be monitored through three electrodes placed on your chest. The lights in the room will be lowered and a sonographer will gain images of your heart by placing a transducer on various parts of your chest and acquiring images on the ultrasound machine.

## What are the risks of an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is completely pain free and harmless. There are no associated risks with having this procedure performed.

## How long will an echocardiogram take?

It varies from person to person and can take from 15 minutes up to an hour. It's a common, safe test, and most people find it's not uncomfortable, although you may feel a bit of pressure as the technician presses the probe onto your chest to obtain the best images.

## Preparing for your echocardiogram

There is no need to prepare for an echocardiogram.