

## Cardiac Investigations

# Transoesophageal echocardiogram

A transoesophageal echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan to look at the structure of the heart chambers and valves. It involves swallowing a probe to view the heart from the gullet.

You've been asked to attend to have a transoesophageal echocardiogram. This leaflet is designed to help you understand the procedure.

### Benefits of the procedure

Usually, ultrasound of the heart is performed through the chest wall (transthoracic echocardiogram). The picture may not be very clear because the ribs and lungs tend to get in the way.

Because the heart lies in front of the gullet, the pictures obtained with the transoesophageal echocardiogram are much clearer. Also, some structures are only seen well on a transoesophageal echocardiogram.

### Risks of the procedure

Most people have no difficulties with the procedure. Occasionally, there can be minor discomfort on swallowing for 24 hours afterwards. Serious complications are very rare.

Very rarely, we are unable to pass the probe and the procedure cannot be performed. If that happens an alternative test will be arranged.



## Patient Information

### Transport

You cannot drive for 24 hours after the procedure as you will be given sedation. You'll need someone bring you to hospital and to take you home again.

### Items to bring in

Bring an overnight bag with toiletries and nightwear in case you need to stay overnight.

### Eating and drinking

If your scan appointment is in the morning (before 12.30pm)

- Do not eat or drink after midnight before your appointment

If your scan appointment is in the afternoon (after 12.30pm):

- Do not eat or drink after 7am before your appointment.

### Medicines

Continue to take your usual medicines, including blood thinners such as warfarin.

Bring **all** your medication into hospital with you. The nursing staff and doctors will need to see them.

### When you arrive at the hospital

Go to the Department of Cardiac Investigations (Clinic 7) in the Main Outpatients Area. This is on the ground floor, off the main hospital corridor.

When you arrive you'll be met by a cardiology doctor, nurse, clinical physiologist or a support worker who will look after you. They'll show you to our checking-in/preparation area and help you to prepare for the scan.

## Patient Information

### **Before the procedure**

We will ask you some questions and you'll have your blood pressure and pulse recorded. You will have the opportunity to ask questions.

A doctor will come to see you and explain the test. Then they'll ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to have the test.

You'll then be accompanied by the member of staff into the procedure room where we perform the scan. This will be a single room - you will be the only patient in this room and will have full privacy.

The staff will bring you a hospital gown. You will be asked by the nurse to remove your shirt or blouse. You may leave any underwear on.

### **During the procedure**

A small needle will be placed into the back of your hand or arm to allow a sedative to be given if needed.

Before the procedure, a clip is placed on the fingertip, to monitor your blood oxygen levels. You may also be given oxygen through a small plastic tube placed in the nostrils. Your heart trace (ECG) will be monitored.

A local anaesthetic spray will be used to numb the back of the throat. Sedatives (relaxing injections) called midazolam and in some cases fentanyl may be given through the needle in the back of your hand or arm.

Sometimes the sedative may make it difficult for you to remember details or information. You may wish to have a member of your family present with you for the visit.

The scan is performed lying on your left side. Before the procedure, a mouth guard will be used to protect your teeth. The probe will be placed into your mouth and throat. At this point you will be asked to swallow, allowing it to pass down to the gullet.

## Patient Information

Once the probe has been placed into the gullet, your doctor will inspect parts of the heart on the screen of the echocardiogram machine. The procedure takes around 20 minutes.

### **After the procedure**

Once the procedure is completed, you'll then be taken into our recovery area. We will check your blood pressure and pulse and observe you.

You will remain in the recovery area for up to 3 hours to allow any sedation to wear off.

If a return to the recovery area is not needed, you can go home straight after the procedure.

Your tongue and throat may feel swollen, similar to the way your lips feel after a local anaesthetic for dental work.

**Do not** eat or drink for one hour after the procedure. You can eat and drink when you are able to swallow and cough.

### **Results**

The scan requires complex analysis and reporting which is done later that day. The report then is sent to your referring consultant.

Your referring consultant will be in touch with your results and subsequent management plan. We cannot give you full results during your visit.

### **Going home**

Once you have been seen by the doctor, you'll be discharged home. Arrange for a family member or friend to drive you home.

You need someone to be with you for the first 24 hours after discharge.

## Patient Information

Do not drive or operate machinery for 24 hours.

## Hospital address

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust  
Clifford Bridge Road  
Coventry  
CV2 2DX

If you any questions about your procedure, please contact:

## Cardiac Bookings

024 7696 5767

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5767. We will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smokefree policy.

## Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

[www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback)



### Document History

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