

Cardiology department

Bubble study

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet explains what a bubble echocardiogram is and what will happen at your appointment. If you have any questions, please speak to your care team.

Why do I need to have a bubble echocardiogram?

A bubble echocardiogram can help us to diagnose heart structures such as a patent foramen ovale (PFO) – a flap between the top two chambers of the heart, the atria. This is a common diagnosis and happens in up to 25% of the population. The bubble echocardiogram will help your doctor to diagnose you and recommend the right treatments.

How do I prepare for my scan?

You don't need to do anything special to prepare for this scan. You can eat and drink as normal on the day and take all of your regular medication.

If you need a chaperone and/or an interpreter

If you need someone to come to the appointment with you (a chaperone), please tell the receptionist when you arrive for your appointment.

If you need an interpreter, please contact us on the number for your cardiac department (see below) three days before your appointment. We can then book an interpreter for your appointment.

Plan your journey

Many people benefit from planning their journey to the hospital. Knowing your route can help you get there in plenty of time for your appointment. There are a small number of general and disabled car parking spaces at the different hospitals (except for St Mary's).

For help with journey planning, please visit: www.imperial.nhs.uk > [our location](#) > choose the correct hospital > hospital map > parking and www.tfl.gov.uk.

On the day of your appointment

Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the time of your appointment and go to the cardiology reception desk.

Charing Cross Hospital

- 020 3311 1028
- Cardiac Investigation Unit, Fifth floor, Charing Cross Hospital, Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8RF

Hammersmith Hospital

- 020 3313 3948
- Cardiac Investigation Unit 2, Hammersmith Hospital, Ground floor, B block, Du Cane Road, London W12 0HS

St Mary's Hospital

- 020 3312 1241
- Waller cardiovascular unit, Ground floor, Mary Stanford Wing, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

On the day of your test

- a member of our team will call you and they will then explain the test, which is safe, and you can ask questions
- next they will ask you to change into a gown

During the scan

We will put a small amount of gel on your chest and place a scanner on your chest so the echocardiographer can see your heart.

They will insert a small tube called a cannula into one of the veins in your arm. Then they'll inject bubbles into your blood stream. Then the echocardiographer will watch how the bubbles fill your heart chambers on a screen.

The test takes about 45 to 60 minutes. We'll sent the results to the physician that referred you within 2 to 3 weeks.

Please note: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust is a teaching hospital and so there might be trainee medical staff in your appointment. We will ask you first if this is ok.

What if I cannot make my appointment?

If you cannot make your appointment, please contact the cardiology department to cancel or reschedule.

Further information

For more information, please visit www.nhs.uk and search for 'hole in the heart'.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:
Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk