

Cardiology

Contrast echocardiogram

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

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

What is a contrast echocardiogram?

A contrast echocardiogram is a specific type of echocardiogram which uses a special dye, called a contrast agent. The contrast agent is injected into one of the veins in your arms. The dye helps us see your heart more clearly.

Why do I need to have a contrast echocardiogram?

Your doctor wants to find out more about your heart. This scan will give them specific information about the structure of your heart and the flow of blood in your heart. We can't get this information from a standard transthoracic echocardiogram (echo).

How do I prepare for my scan?

- tell us before the test if you have allergies, so we can decide whether you can have the test – ask your care team if you have any questions about allergies

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 the scan

Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the time for 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

Before your scan

- a member of our team will call you and explain the test, any potential risks and side effects and you can ask questions
- you will sign a consent form to show that you understand what happens during the test and that you agree to have it

During the scan

- We will ask you to undress to the waist and give you a gown to wear, and then ask you to lie on your left side.
- 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. We will use this to inject the contrast. The contrast is very safe. It is used for ultrasounds and will not affect your kidneys.

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- The test takes between about 45 to 60 minutes. We will send the results of your scan to the consultant or GP that referred you.

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

Risks and side effects of the test

Rarely (1 in 10,000), some people can experience an adverse reaction to the contrast. This includes a hypersensitivity reaction, such as:

- reddening or swelling of the skin
- hives
- swelling of the face, hands, feet or ankles
- low blood pressure
- slower heart rate

If this happens the clinician would stop the test and give you some medication if you needed it.

What if I cannot make my appointment?

Please call us on **020 3313 5000** to cancel or reschedule.

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 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). 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

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Published: August 2025
Review date: August 2028
Reference no: 2998
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