

Cardiology

Transoesophageal echocardiogram

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet explains what a transoesophageal echocardiogram (TOE) is and what will happen in your appointment. Please contact your care team if you have any questions.

What is a TOE?

TOE is a test where we use an ultrasound to see detail of any problems with your heart valves and heart structure. An ultrasound is a scan we use to see images of the inside of your body.

We can see more detail because we insert an ultrasound probe into the oesophagus (food pipe). The oesophagus and heart are right next to each other, so the probe is very close to the heart, which provide better pictures.

The test will last about an hour. Afterwards, your doctor will be able to see your heart and recommend the right treatment.

Are there any risks involved in having this test?

There is a very small risk of damaging the oesophagus (1 in 5,000 patients).

Some people experience a sore throat after the test. Please speak with your team if you have any concerns or questions.

Before the test

If you have had any difficulties with swallowing, or stomach or gullet disorders, please tell the doctor who ordered this test for you.

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 020 3313 3948, 3 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 test

- do not eat or drink for at least six hours before the test
- arrange for a friend, relative or carer to come with you on the day as we will sedate you during the test – if you don't arrange this, we will not be able to do the test
- continue taking your normal medication unless told not to by your consultant – ask your care team if you're not sure what to do
- morning medication can be taken 3 hours before the procedure, please take this with a small sip of water only
- do not plan to drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours after your test

Please:

- arrange for someone to stay with you overnight at home – if you don't arrange this, we will not be able to do the test
- arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the time for your appointment and go to the cardiac investigation reception desk (echocardiography)
- if you're on warfarin, please bring your 'yellow' INR booklet

During the test

Before the test is started, the team will check that you understand the test and that you agree to have it. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions you have about the test.

- we'll take you to a private room, give you a hospital gown and ask you to temporarily take off any glasses or dentures
- you'll lie on a bed
- the doctor will insert a small needle into a vein in your arm to give you the sedation drugs
- we will give you a throat spray to numb your throat
- we'll put a small plastic bite guard between your teeth

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- we'll monitor your blood pressure and your heart rhythm throughout the test – we'll put 3 patches (electrodes) on your chest to do this
 - we'll give you oxygen to breathe and monitor your oxygen levels with a clip lightly attached to your finger
 - once you're comfortable, we'll ask you to swallow an ultrasound probe – although this may not be pleasant, it shouldn't be painful
 - you will still be able to breathe normally through your mouth and nose

After the test

We will monitor your heart rhythm and blood pressure for about half an hour after the test. Before you leave the hospital, we'll give you information about how to look after yourself at home.

Your friend or relative must take you home.

Further information

To watch a video about having a transoesophageal echocardiogram please visit:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/echocardiogram/

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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