

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

---

# Contrast echocardiogram

---

This leaflet gives you information about the test that has been booked for you.

### **What is a contrast echocardiogram?**

An echocardiogram or 'echo' is a scan that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to produce pictures of the heart. The test is painless and without side effects. It does not use radioactivity.

During the test, a dye called a contrast agent is injected, which improves the quality of the images that are being recorded.

### **Why is it being done?**

If your doctor has decided that you need an echocardiogram, but if the picture quality is not very good, a contrast agent can be used to help improve the images.

### **What does it involve?**

You will be taken into a room with low level lighting. The person performing the test is called a sonographer, who may be male or female. The sonographer will usually not be a doctor. This means that some questions you may have about the result may have to wait until you see your doctor.

You will be asked to undress to the waist, gowns are available that should be left open to the front.

You will be asked to lie on a couch on your left hand side.

Stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the machine. These will be used to monitor your heart rate during the test. A cannula (small plastic tube) will be placed in your arm.

An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel is placed gently on the chest and the sonographer will record a number of pictures of the heart. While this is happening, a contrast agent will be injected into the cannula to improve the quality of the images.

### **Where will I have my test?**

This is a specialised test and is only available at the King's Mill Hospital site.

### **How long will it take?**

The test will take approximately 30-40 minutes to complete.

### **What preparation is needed?**

You can take all your medication as normal. You can eat and drink as normal.

### **At the end of your contrast echo**

Once the test is complete you will be asked to wait in the clinic area for 20 minutes to ensure you do not have any reaction to the contrast.

There are no limitations to what you can do after the test, for example, you may drive.

### **When will I receive the results?**

The images are analysed on special software after the test and the result of this will be sent to your consultant. Your consultant will give you your results at your next clinic appointment.

### **Are there any risks in having the test?**

There is a very small risk (1 in 1000) of developing an allergic reaction to the contrast agent used. If you have had allergic reactions to any medicines previously please inform us before starting the test. You may have some discomfort from the area where the cannula was inserted in your arm.

### **What if I need hospital transport?**

If you need hospital transport due to medical reasons you will need to arrange this by using one of the numbers below:

- Nottinghamshire/Leicester: 0345 266 9662
- Derbyshire: 0300 300 3434
- Lincolnshire: 0843 357 1556.

### **Contact details**

Cardiorespiratory and Vascular  
Department: **01623 672259**.

### **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)  
Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222  
**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692  
**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL202311-05-CE  
Created: December 2017 / Revised: November 2023 /  
Review Date: November 2025