

**INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS**

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## **Echocardiogram for children**

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This leaflet gives you information about the test that has been booked for the child in your care.

### **What is it?**

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.

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

An echocardiogram allows the doctor to learn more about your child's heart. Reasons for having the test may include:

- To look for or rule out heart defects such as holes in the heart and valve problems.
- Look at pumping strength and heart muscle problems.
- Following heart surgery to monitor the growth and function of the heart.

### **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 the doctor in clinic.

Your child will be asked to undress to the waist; gowns are available for older children that should be left open to the front. Older children will be asked to lie on a couch on their left hand side. Young children and babies can sit on your lap on the couch.

Stickers may be attached to the chest and connected to the machine. These will be used to monitor the heart rate during the test.

An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel is placed gently on the centre of the chest and will be moved to different positions – around the chest, beneath the rib cage and to the base of the neck. This provides images of the heart from a number of different angles which are then recorded.

During the echocardiogram you will hear sounds coming from the machine, which represent blood flow through the heart.

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

### **Are there any special precautions I need to take?**

No. Children can take any medication as normal. They can eat and drink as normal.

## Babies and young children

The test is more successful if babies have had a recent feed before the test. They may also have a bottle of milk, or you may breastfeed, whilst the test is being performed. For young children it can be helpful to bring along a drink and snacks, and favourite toys, which they may have during the test.

## 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 the consultant who requested the test. The consultant will give you the results at your next clinic appointment.

## Can I have the appointment at Newark Hospital?

We need to use a special size of ultrasound probe for babies and children, and this is only available at King's Mill Hospital. If you have an older child who is adult sized, or nearly adult sized, we may be able to perform the scan at Newark Hospital. Please call us to discuss this.

## 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.

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