Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Transthoracic Echocardiogram

Version number: **8**
Last modified date: **12th November 2026**

Transthoracic Echocardiogram

Patient Information

Cardiology Department

- Author ID: JS
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What is it?

An echocardiogram or echo is a scan that uses ultrasound (sound waves) to produce pictures of the heart.

Risks

The scan is painless and without side effects. It does not use radioactivity.

Benefits

An echocardiogram gives your consultant information about how well the heart pumps and whether your heart valves are working properly. However, it is not able to tell your consultant whether you have angina or not.

What does the procedure involve?

You will be invited to a private darkened room in the Cardiology department at RAEI. The person performing the test is called a Cardiac Clinical Physiologist trained to perform echocardiography, who may be male or female. The Echo-cardiographer will not usually be a doctor. This means that some questions you may have about the result may have to wait until you see your doctor in the clinic.

If you require a chaperone, you may bring a friend or relative. Alternatively with advance notice, the hospital may provide a chaperone at your request.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and be offered a gown that should be left open to

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

Stickers will be attached to your chest and connected to the machines. These will be used to monitor your heart rate during the scan.

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

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

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

Are there any special precautions I need to take before the Echocardiogram?

No, you can take all your medication as normal. You can eat and drink as normal.

At the end of your Echocardiogram

Once the echocardiogram is complete you can get dressed and leave. There are no limitations as to what you can do after the scan. You will be able to drive.

Results

These will be given to you by the referring doctor during a separate appointment.

Contact information

Please contact the department on **01942 822445** should any further information be required, Monday to Friday, 8am to 4:30 pm



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