

Patient information leaflet

Bubble contrast study

Cardiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about a Bubble contrast study. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

IMPORTANT information ahead of your procedure

- **HOSPITAL TRANSPORT PATIENTS:** Please ensure you make arrangements with transport for both arrival to hospital and return.
- Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Staff are not permitted to supervise children so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your appointment being rescheduled.
- Please allow enough time for parking to avoid your appointment being rescheduled. We advise allowing at least 20 minutes before your appointment slot to allow enough time to park your car, as parking is limited. You may want to leave your car in an offsite car park.

What is a bubble contrast study?

An ultrasound scan of the heart is called an Echocardiogram and is performed to obtain images of the cardiac chambers and valves. The procedure involves gel and a probe being placed on the chest surface and the operator will move the probe around to obtain the best images. Sometimes it is necessary to obtain clearer pictures of the chambers and blood flow using a contrast agent. One type of contrast used is saline (sterile salt water) which is agitated to form very small micro bubbles which show clearly on an ultrasound scan. The saline is then injected into a vein through an intravenous (IV) line and the echocardiogram is performed to observe the bubbles.

Why do I need a bubble contrast Study?

Your doctor has asked you to have a bubble study to determine the blood flow through your heart which is particularly useful in patients who have experienced a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) to ensure there is no additional connection between the right and left side of the heart.

Preparing for your procedure

You may eat and drink as normal.

Medication

Please continue with all your normal medications.

Getting to us

Please come to The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX) and follow the signage to the Cardiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, Blue Zone. Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the Cardiology department approximately 10 minutes prior to your appointment time. Unfortunately, if you are late we may have to reschedule.

The day of the procedure

There are no specific requirements on the day of your procedure but please wear two-piece loose-fitting clothing.

The procedure

- A bubble study is a simple procedure and usually takes approximately 25 minutes but expect to be in the department for up to 45 minutes particularly as an echocardiogram may be performed first if necessary.
- You will be asked to remove the top half of your clothing and a gown will be provided where necessary.
- Three ECG electrodes will be attached to your torso, a cannula will be inserted into a vein by a doctor and you will be asked to lie partially on your left side.
- Two syringes containing sterile saline will be attached to the cannula and the doctor will agitate the saline between the syringes.
- A physiologist will begin scanning your heart while the doctor injects the saline.
- An ultrasound probe covered by a small amount of gel is placed on the skin surface beneath the left breast providing the required images. The images obtained are recorded.
- You will then be asked to perform a valsalva maneuver which involves blowing against an obstruction, usually your thumb or a syringe, whilst the saline is injected again.

After the procedure

After the scan the cannula will be removed and you will be able to dress and leave the department.

Can I drive after my procedure?

You are able to drive as soon as you are discharged from the department.

Can someone stay with me in hospital?

You may have a friend or family member attend with you, but they will be asked to stay in the waiting area while you are having your examination.

How soon can I return to work?

You are able to return to work as soon as discharged from the department.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please contact the Cardiology Department on: Telephone: **01279 827337**

Office hours: **9am-430pm Monday-Friday**

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours. Please leave a message and a member of the team will contact you.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or 01279 827211.

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net or 01279 827926 if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.