

Patient information

Transoesophageal echocardiogram

Cardiac team

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your transoesophageal echocardiogram. Please contact the team if you require further information.

What is a transoesophageal echocardiogram?

A transoesophageal echocardiogram is an ultrasound test to check the structure of your heart and how well it is functioning. To do this, a small ultrasound probe is passed from your mouth into your oesophagus (gullet). Clear images can be taken as the probe is near the heart.

Why do I need a transoesophageal echocardiogram?

You may have already had an echocardiogram, otherwise known as an echo, to check how well your heart is functioning.

The images from the initial test may not have been clear enough, so in your case, better images need to be taken closer to your heart.

How safe is a transoesophageal echocardiogram?

As with any medical procedure, some risks are associated:

The decision to perform the transoesophageal echo will only have been made when it is felt that the benefits of knowing how your heart muscle and valves are working outweigh the risks involved.

You will be invited for a pre-assessment prior to procedure and will be given a leaflet explaining the risks. On the day of your procedure your doctor will answer any questions you or your family have.

Preparing for your procedure

Eating and drinking

Your stomach must be empty for six hours before your procedure

For a morning appointment

- Do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight
- Do not take any morning medication but bring it with you

For an afternoon appointment

- You may have a light early breakfast before 7am e.g. tea and toast or cereal together with your morning medication
- After 7am, please do not have anything to eat, drink, or take any medication

Medication

You will have an opportunity to discuss any medication concerns at pre- assessment.

Warfarin

If you take warfarin medication, your warfarin blood test will be taken on the day of your procedure. If the warfarin blood test is too high (above 3.5) your procedure may be cancelled.

Getting to us

Directions

The Cath Lab is on the lower ground floor, next to the Alexandra Day Surgery Unit (ADSU). We are in the Blue Zone.

Please arrange to be dropped off and collected from the maternity drop off. You can access this from entrance B, from Hayden's Roundabout.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive at your appointment time and not before:

- If you have an 8am appointment please expect to be in the department for most of the morning
- If you have a 1pm appointment, please expect to be in the department for most of the afternoon

Please note there is preparation time before the procedure and recovery time afterwards.

The day of the procedure

Whilst you may make your own way to the hospital, you need to arrange for somebody to accompany you home and stay with you overnight.

You will be greeted by the team and taken to your bed on the day ward. There will be a short checklist to go through. You will be seen by the doctor who will examine you, check that you are happy to go ahead and ask you to sign a consent form for the procedure.

There may be some waiting before your procedure and the theatre environment can seem cold to some. It is suggested you bring something to read and a warm dressing gown or top to wear over your hospital gown.

The procedure

A nurse will accompany you when it is time for the procedure. The room will have a lot of specialist equipment and the staff will be wearing theatre clothing. The room will be air conditioned, which will make it feel cooler.

Anaesthetic spray will be used to make the back of your throat numb. You will be given sedation through a tube in a vein in your arm. You will swallow the probe once your throat is numb and it will be passed from your mouth into your oesophagus.

The procedure is not painful and does not interfere with your breathing. The whole test should take no more than 30 minutes.

After the procedure

You will return back to your bed, where you will be monitored closely by the nursing team. You will be able to eat and drink after 30 minutes, but as your throat will have been anaesthetised, you must not have a hot drink for two hours to allow this to wear off.

Your doctor will discuss the results with you and you are encouraged to ask any questions.

Can I drive after my procedure?

You are advised not to drive home after your procedure as you will have had sedation. Please ensure you have someone to collect you and stay with you overnight.

Can someone stay with me in hospital?

You may be accompanied by one responsible adult.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please contact the Cardiac Angiography Suite on:

Telephone: 01279 827814 or 01279 827913

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm

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

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.

Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust, Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX

01279 444455