Echocardiogram Appointment

Patient information - Echocardiography Department

www.healthinfo.org.nz

2nd Floor
Parkside West
Christchurch Hospital

Your Doctor has asked for you to attend an appointment for an ultrasound of your heart (Echocardiogram, or “Echo”). This takes approximately 30 minutes.

**Appointment Date:**
**Appointment Time:**

Please phone (03) 364 1110 (and push option 3) if you are unable to attend your appointment.
Thank you,
Echo Department

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram uses ultrasound to take images of the heart. Ultrasound is high frequency sound that the human ear cannot detect. The ultrasound machine sends out pulses of this sound, and then senses the sound that bounces back from the heart. It uses this received sound to make up a picture of the heart.

There are no known ill effects of ultrasound. Ultrasound scanning has been used for decades to take pictures virtually every other part of the human body in addition to the heart.

What will happen when I have the scan?

The scan is performed in a room that has an examination bed for you to lie on and a chair for some of your clothing.

If a male is performing your scan, a female chaperone is available if requested. You will be required to undress from the waist up, and then lie on the bed.

You will be asked to lie on your left side during the scan as this makes it easier to see the heart. This may mean you are unable to see the images on the screen during the test.

Three ECG electrodes (stickers) will be placed on the skin to record the electrical signal from the heart during the scan. The ultrasound images are obtained by holding the ultrasound transducer at several sites on the chest between the ribs. The scan can take anywhere up to 45 minutes, depending on what specific information is required. There should be little discomfort during the scan.

The physiologist operates the machine and obtains the images; these are sent to an Echocardiologist to be reviewed and reported. This report is then available to the referring doctor who will discuss the results with you. A copy of the results is also sent to your GP.