



**heartscan**  
THE ECHO EXPERTS

# Private Echocardiography



## What is an Echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram, commonly known as an Echo, uses ultrasound to examine the heart. It is a similar technique to the scans performed in pregnant women to examine the unborn baby and is completely safe and painless. It provides information on the structure of the heart and how the heart is working.

Measurements are obtained to assess the size of the heart chambers and the thickness of the heart muscle.

Echo also measures the pumping action of the heart, the function of heart valves and determines whether there are any congenital abnormalities.

## How is an Echo performed?

- Three small sticky patches (electrodes) are applied to the chest to record the heart rate.
- A small device called a transducer is used to obtain images of the heart.
- Ultrasound gel is applied to the surface of the transducer so that it makes contact with the skin.
- The transducer is then placed on the chest and pictures of the heart are obtained from different angles.
- The transducer sends out harmless ultrasound waves which reflect off structures in the heart allowing a picture of the heart to be made on the screen.
- Audio information is also used to indicate blood flow through the heart so 'whooshing noises' can be heard. The test takes approximately 30 minutes to perform.



### Is there any special preparation for an Echo?

No, you do not need to make any special preparations for an echocardiogram. Fasting is not required for an Echo so you may eat and drink as normal before and after the test. All medications can also be taken as usual.

### Can someone accompany me?

You may, if you wish, bring a friend or relative who may be present during the scan. If you require a female operator or chaperone please advise HeartScan before your appointment.

### How long does the test take?

The test takes approximately 30 minutes to perform and the analysis and report can take up to 45 minutes to generate.

### What happens after my Echo?

The images and measurements are analysed by an Echo Specialist. You will receive a personalised report typically 72 hours after your Echo, which can also be sent to your doctor.

### What happens when I attend for my Echo?

- You will be escorted to a private room to have your Echo.
- Your height and weight will be measured so that measurements of your heart structures can be related to your body build.
- You will be provided with a gown to wear and the physiologist will need access to your chest.
- The lights will be dimmed when the scan is performed so that the pictures of your heart are seen clearly on a monitor which is a little like a television screen.
- You may be asked to slightly change your position, lie flat and hold your breath at times.
- At the end of the test you are free to dress and leave the scanning room. If you require help at any time such as getting on or off the couch the operator will be pleased to assist you.

