

Patient information factsheet

Transoesophageal echocardiogram (TOE)

This leaflet provides information about your forthcoming appointment so that you know exactly what to expect. We'll go into more detail during your appointment and you'll also be able to ask any questions that you may have.

Having a transoesophageal echocardiogram

A transoesophageal echocardiogram (TOE) is an ultrasound scan which looks at the structure and function of your heart.

A regular echocardiogram (also known as a transthoracic echocardiogram or TTE) uses a probe on the outside of the chest to take ultrasound pictures of your heart. For a TOE the probe taking pictures of the heart is on the end of a small flexible tube called a scope, which is inserted through the mouth and into your food pipe (oesophagus). The pictures taken using TOE can be much more detailed than regular echo pictures as the probe is much closer to your heart.

Preparing for your test

You should not have anything to eat or drink (including water) for six hours prior to your admission. During this test you will be given sedation so it's important that you arrange for a friend or relative to collect you from hospital and stay with you overnight following the procedure. You should continue to take all of your normal medications, but you must only take them with a very small amount of water.

If you take warfarin, you must have your INR level checked within seven days prior to your admission. You'll need to call us with your INR results **24 to 72 hours prior to your admission.** We can be contacted on **023 8120 6404** between 9.30am and 2pm Monday to Friday.

At the appointment

On arrival a nurse will admit you to the cardiac short stay unit and ask you questions from a routine checklist. You'll need to change into a hospital gown for the procedure. A doctor or sonographer (qualified specialist who operates ultrasound equipment) will then explain the procedure to you, including any specific risks that might relate to you and you'll have a chance to ask questions. We'll ask you to sign a consent form before we start the procedure. A small tube called a cannula will be inserted into one of the veins in your arm so that we can give you sedation to help you relax.

The procedure is performed in a treatment room and monitoring equipment will be attached to you to measure your heart rate and oxygen levels. We will give your oxygen through your nose during the procedure.

The doctor will spray your throat with a local anaesthetic to make it numb and a mouth guard will be placed between your teeth to protect them while we use the scope. Once you're sedated and are comfortable and sleepy, the procedure will begin. The lights will be dimmed to help the doctor see the images on the monitor more clearly.

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The doctor will perform this procedure with the assistance of a nurse and physiologist. The procedure, including preparation time, may take up to one hour. The procedure can feel unpleasant but should not be painful. When the test is complete the probe is gently removed. After the procedure you will return to the cardiac short stay unit where you will be monitored for around two hours until the sedation has fully worn off.

Your results

Your results will be sent to the doctor who requested the test, which may be your GP or a hospital consultant. You may be given the results of this test during your next clinic appointment with your hospital consultant. Alternatively the results may be sent back directly to your GP. If you are unsure please ask during your appointment.

Further information

If you need help getting to your appointment please contact your GP surgery so they can arrange hospital transportation for you.

If you would like further information please contact the non-invasive cardiology department on **023 8120 6404**. Alternatively you can visit our website at **www.uhs.nhs.uk** and search for 'non-invasive cardiology'.

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