



Blackrock Clinic

CARDIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Bubble Study Echocardiogram & Contrast Study



Blackrock Clinic

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SMALL STEPS - BIG CHANGES

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When your Experience Needs Ours



What is a Bubble Study Echocardiogram?

A bubble saline echocardiogram can be performed during an echocardiogram if there is an indication to see if there is a small hole in the heart also known as a PFO. A PFO is a normal flap valve opening that occurs in the wall (atrial septum) of the heart that separates the right atrium from the left atrium (the top two heart chambers) while in the womb but usually closes spontaneously following birth. In a quarter of people it stays open and can intermittently allow blood flow to pass from the right atrium to the left atrium.

How is it performed?

- You will be taken into our scan room and asked to undress to waist level, ladies will be asked to remove their top undergarments and given a gown to wear open at the front.
- You will then be asked to lie on your left side with your left arm underneath your head. Lubricating jelly is placed on a probe and moved around your chest and image recordings taken.
- An IV cannula will be inserted into your arm for the administration of the saline.
- Whilst echo images are taken the saline is inserted through the cannula, this may be repeated several times and on some occasions you will be asked to carry out some simple breathing exercises.

After the test:

Once you have had your bubble echocardiogram, the images will be analysed and a report generated, and sent to the appropriate doctor.

The test will take approximately one hour.

What is a Contrast Study?

A contrast echocardiogram is an ultrasound investigation of the heart, where a contrast agent (such as Sonovue®) is injected into the blood stream to make the pictures clearer. A contrast echocardiogram test is particularly helpful for examining the heart muscle in more detail if the images are not clear enough.

How is it performed?

- You will be taken into our scan room and asked to undress to waist level, ladies will be asked to remove their top undergarments and given a gown to wear open at the front
- An IV cannula will be inserted into your arm for the administration of the contrast.
- You will then be asked to lie on your left side with your left arm underneath your head. Lubricating jelly is placed on a probe and moved around your chest and image recordings taken.
- During the scan contrast is injected, to improve the image quality.

After the test

Once you have had your contrast echocardiogram, the images will be analysed and a report generated, and sent to the appropriate doctor.

