



Blackrock Clinic

CARDIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

# *Echocardiogram & Stress Echo*



Blackrock Clinic

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SMALL STEPS - BIG CHANGES

FP 1830 jun2017

*When your Experience Needs Ours*

## What is an Echocardiogram?

An echo is a non invasive test used to assess the pumping function of your heart.

It enables your Cardiologist to assess:

- The overall function of your heart's valves and chambers.
- The clinical manifestations of many types of heart disease such as valvular disease, myocardial disease, coronary artery disease and congenital heart disease.
- Monitoring, evaluation.

## What happens during an echocardiogram?

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.

The person performing the test is called a Cardiac Physiologist and may be male or female. If you require a chaperone you may bring a friend or relative. Alternatively the hospital may be able to provide a female physiologist at your request.

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.

## After the test:

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

**This test can take approximately 30 – 40 minutes**

## What is a Stress Echo?

A stress echo is a non invasive test used to assess the structure and pumping function of your heart during exercise.

## How is it performed?

- You will be asked to undress to the waist; your skin will be wiped and prepared with an abrasive sheet. If necessary your chest will be shaved.
- 10 electrodes will be placed across your chest and each electrode will be attached to the ECG machine. A blood pressure cuff will also be attached. If you wish a gown or top will be provided.
- Initially echo images will be taken to gain baseline images of your heart. ECG and Blood pressure recordings are taken at rest also, if all are satisfactory we will proceed with the exercise phase.
- For exercise you typically walk on the treadmill, and the test is usually performed in a series of stages, each lasting 3 minutes. After each 3 minute stage, the resistance or speed of the treadmill is increased. Your ECG and blood pressure is monitored throughout.
- The test continues until you need to stop, reach maximum heart rate or the Physiologist feels we have reached the end, as soon as you stop exercising, an echo image is taken of your heart to see how it reacts to exercise.
- Your echo images, ECG and Blood pressure will be monitored.
- Once everything has returned to normal, the electrodes are removed and the report is sent to the relevant doctor.

**This test can take approximately 40 minutes.**

