Total Cardiology®

Echocardiogram (Echo) Preparation Instructions

Appointment Date:	Time:

Preparing for Your Test:

On the day of your test:

- You may eat or drink as your normally would before the test.
- Please take your medications as usual before the test.
- Do not apply body lotions, creams or powders to your chest before the appointment.
- A Holter monitor or blood pressure monitor cannot be worn during the test.
- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment and bring your Alberta Health Care Card and government-issued, photo ID with you for this test to be completed.
- If you require a translator, please bring one with you to your appointment.
- Children are not allowed in the lab area and cannot be left unattended in the waiting room.
- The test time varies and can take up to 45 minutes to complete.
- If you need to cancel, please call 403-571-8640 at least 24 hours in advance to reschedule. No shows will be charged a cancellation fee.
- Information about bubble study echocardiograms and contrast echocardiograms can be found on the next page (back or page).

Appointment Location

#110, 2891 Sunridge Way NE
Phone: 403-571-8640
Free parking is available next to the building.

Transit Directions

- Rundle station is the nearest C-Train station
- Bus 19 to Sunridge Way NE

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram (or echo) uses ultrasound to create images of the heart. The sound waves show the function of your heart valves, the pumping action of your heart, and can detect any abnormalities.

A copy of your test findings (echo, bubble study and contrast echo) will be sent to your referring and/or family doctor who can discuss the results with you.

What will happen during the test?

- You will be asked to undress from the waist up and given a gown to wear.
- Lying on an exam bed, a sonographer will place sticky electrodes on your chest to record your heartbeat.
- A water-based ultrasound gel will be put on your chest and a transducer device will be moved across your chest to create the images.
- You will be asked to turn to your side and may feel slight pressure as the device is positioned to get the best images of your heart.

Contrast Echocardiogram | Bubble Study Information

Bubble Study (Agitated Saline Study)

What is a bubble study and why is it performed?

A bubble study is a non-invasive test which is done during an echocardiogram. It is done to rule out any abnormal openings between the right and left side of the heart.

What happens during a bubble study?

- The sonographer will first perform an echocardiogram (heart ultrasound).
- Once the ultrasound images are complete, a nurse will place an IV into your arm. The cardiologist will then administer a harmless saline solution that has been mixed (agitated) with air to create microbubbles into the IV.
- The sonographer will take additional images of the heart with the microbubbles from the solution visible. The cardiologist may do multiple injections of saline into the IV – this is normal for this type of test.
- You will be asked to bear down briefly to help increase pressure on the right side of your heart. This is called a Valsalva maneuver and is a normal part of the test.
- Once the additional images with the bubbles are taken and the test is complete, the IV will be removed and a bandage will be applied at the insertion site.

After the test:

- Avoid heaving lifting with that arm for 1 – 2 hours to prevent bruising.
- You can leave following the test unless you are waiting to have another test done.

Contrast Echocardiogram

What is a contrast echocardiogram and why is it performed?

A contrast echocardiogram uses a contrast agent to enhance the ultrasound images of the heart. A contrast echocardiogram is done to:

- Provide more clear and detailed images of the internal structures of the heart
- Detect any abnormalities in the chambers or walls of the heart
- Assess for left ventricular thrombus
- Identify and shunts or abnormal openings between the chambers of the heart

What happens during a contrast echocardiogram?

- A nurse will explain the test to you, assess any contraindications, take your blood pressure, and place an IV line into your arm.
- A sonographer will bring you to the exam room and perform an echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) to capture initial images.
- A cardiologist will then administer the contrast agent through the IV.
- The sonographer will take additional images of the heart while the contrast agent is circulating.
- Once the contrast images are taken and the test is complete, the IV line will be removed and a bandage will be placed at the insertion site.

After the test:

- Avoid heaving lifting with that arm for 1 – 2 hours to prevent bruising.
- You will be asked to wait in the waiting room for 15 minutes following the test. You can then leave unless you are having another test done.

Safety and Considerations:

Contrast echocardiography is generally safe. The contrast agents used are different from those used in other imaging tests, such as CT scans or MRIs. It is important to inform the healthcare provider of any allergies or adverse reactions to contrast agents in the past prior to the test being performed.