



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

Your child is having an echocardiogram under sedation

This leaflet explains about having an echocardiogram under sedation and how to look after your child afterwards.

What is an echocardiogram scan?

Echocardiograms (Echo) are one of the most frequently used scans for diagnosing heart problems. An Echo is a non-invasive, high frequency ultrasound scan of the heart. It lets us evaluate the structure, function and blood flow through the heart.

What happens before the scan?

Sometimes an echocardiogram is carried out while your child is under sedation because they need to lie very still throughout the procedure and it can take a while. It is very important that your child's stomach is as empty as possible on the day of the procedure, as this reduces the risk of vomiting during and after the sedation. If someone vomits under sedation, there is a chance that the stomach contents could get into the lungs, damaging them. Your child's nurse will explain exactly what time your child can last eat or drink before the scan, but as a general rule, they will need to fast (not eat or drink anything) for four hours beforehand. The sedation is given an hour before the scan is scheduled, usually as a liquid medicine for your child to swallow.

What does it involve?

Your child will lie on a bed next to the echo machine. The scan can last from 20 to 60 minutes. The reason we would need to sedate your child is that they must lay very still and quietly to get the best quality picture. This will usually give us enough information to plan your child's treatment. Echo scans are just one part of a series of tests and scans that allow the doctor to monitor your child's heart and plan treatment.

Are there any risks?

There are no risks associated with an echo scan. The gel used causes no harm and the echo itself is painless with no lasting effects.



What happens after the scan?

Unless they are admitted for other tests, you will be able to take your child home once they have woken up and has had a drink. We usually monitor your child for two hours afterwards to make sure they are recovering well. The nurses will tell you what sort of sedation your child has had, in case of later side effects. The following information should help you care for your child when you first go home:

- Children are generally sleepier than usual for 24 hours after sedation. This is because the effects of the sedative last for about a day.
- If your child is unduly sleepy or difficult to rouse, make sure they are in a safe position on their side and ring your family doctor (GP).
- Make sure that your child could tolerate a juice drink before offering anything to eat.
- Give milk only if your child does not feel sick or vomit.
- Your child may have mood changes, which can make them irritable. This is temporary.
- Keep a close watch on your child until they are back to normal. Do not leave them with an inexperienced carer.
- If your child is on any medication, give this as normal.

If you have any questions, please telephone the nurse sedation team on 020 7405 9200 ext 5866 or bleep 0285.

Notes

Compiled by the Echocardiogram/Cardiology Technician
in collaboration with the Child and Family Information Group

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