



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS 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 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 he or she 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. It can also avoid the need for other diagnostic tests, such as cardiac catheterisation and angiography that are invasive or other scans, such as MRI or CT scans that might need to be carried out under general anaesthetic.

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 he or she is admitted for other tests, you will be able to take your child home once he or she has woken up and has had a drink. 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 he or she is in a safe position on their side and ring your 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 him or her irritable. This is temporary.
- Keep a close watch on your child until he or she is back to normal. Do not leave him or her 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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