

## Echocardiogram

### Introduction

The Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend Royal Papworth Hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians.

This information is for patients who are having, or are due to have, an echocardiogram – or ‘echo’. An echo looks at the structures of your heart and gives information on how well your heart is pumping. It is often done if you have had a heart attack or if you have been diagnosed with heart failure, as it shows how much heart muscle has been affected. It is also used routinely to diagnose and assess heart valve problems or congenital heart disease (heart conditions people are born with).

### Guidance for patients

You don't need to do anything special to prepare for the test, but while you are waiting it is important that you keep healthy and well.

This includes things like:

- Taking any medication as prescribed
- Keeping as active as your condition allows (your clinician or GP can give you advice about this if you need it)
- Staying healthy by maintaining a healthy weight and, if relevant, by quitting smoking.

To help you understand more about what will happen when you come in for your echocardiogram, there is some helpful information on the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/echocardiogram/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/echocardiogram/)

### What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Please contact your GP in the first instance. If you are experiencing chest pain, you should seek urgent medical help by calling NHS 111 or, in the case of an emergency, calling 999.

### Contact us

The team at Royal Papworth Hospital is here to help and support you. If you need us, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 01223 638896, or by email at [papworth.pals@nhs.net](mailto:papworth.pals@nhs.net).