

# Patient information

## A guide to diagnostic cardiology

### How to find us

#### Opening Hours

Monday	8:30am to 5:00pm
Tuesday	8:30am to 5:00pm
Wednesday	8:30am to 5:00pm
Thursday	8:30am to 5:00pm
Friday	8:30am to 4:30pm
Closed Saturday and Sunday	



Diagnostic cardiology provides an array of non-invasive diagnostic investigations of the heart.

We are **located** on the **lower ground floor**, in the Cardiac Centre.

We have a number of professional and friendly staff in the cardiology department:

- Department Manager
- Chief Cardiac Physiologists
- Senior Cardiac Physiologists
- Senior Assistant Technical Officer
- Diagnostic Cardiology Assistants
- Data Administrator
- Receptionist

### 12-lead Electrocardiogram

An electrocardiogram (ECG) is a non-invasive test that records the electrical activity of your heart and takes about 10 to 15 minutes. It is used to measure:

- The rate and regularity of your heartbeats



- The presence of any damage to your heart
- Any possible effects of drugs or devices used to regulate the heart e.g. pacemaker

You will be asked to remove your clothing above the waist (a gown will be provided for you) and then asked to lie on the couch and make yourself as comfortable as possible.

Small stickers (electrodes) are placed on to your arms, legs and chest and are connected to the ECG machine by wires. The ECG detects and amplifies the electrical impulses of each heartbeat and records them on to paper.

The result recorded will show any abnormal patterns in the electrical impulses of your heart, which could be causing the symptoms you may be experiencing.

## **24hr ECG Monitoring**

A 24hr ECG Monitor records the rhythm of your heart continuously throughout a 24-hour period.

On the first appointment the monitor is fitted to you and takes about 10 to 15 minutes. You will be asked to remove your clothing above the waist (ladies may leave their bras on).



Three electrodes are attached to your chest and are connected to the monitor in order to record your heart rhythm.

It is important to carry out your regular daily activities whilst wearing the monitor in order to get a true recording over a 24 hour period however you will not be able to shower or have a bath whilst wearing the monitor. The monitor will also need to be worn overnight; advice will be given about the best way to sleep with the monitor at the time of fitting.

You will be asked to keep a diary to record any symptoms you may feel whilst wearing the monitor, and identify the activity you were doing at this time.

The following day the monitor is removed and the data is analysed with help from the information given in your diary. This analysis evaluates the type and amount of any irregular Heartbeats during the day you were wearing the monitor.

## **24hr BP monitoring**

A 24hr BP Monitor records your blood pressure continuously throughout a 24 hour period.



On the first appointment your monitor is fitted and takes about 10 to 15 minutes. A blood pressure cuff is fitted and is connected to the monitor in order to record your blood pressure.

It is important to carry out your regular daily activities whilst wearing the monitor in order to get a true recording over the 24 hour period however you will not be able to shower or have a bath whilst wearing the monitor. The monitor will also need to be worn overnight; advice will be given about the best way to sleep with the monitor at the time of fitting.

You will be asked to keep a diary to record any symptoms you may feel whilst wearing the monitor, and identify the activity you were doing at this time.

The following day the monitor is removed and the data is analysed along with the help from information given in your diary. This analysis evaluates your blood pressure during the day you were wearing the monitor.

## **7-day or 28-day monitoring**

The monitors record the electrical signals of your heart continuously over a 7 or 28 day period.

On the first appointment the monitor is fitted and takes about 20 to 30 minutes. One sticky electrode is attached to the centre of your chest and another to the left side of your chest. The electrodes are connected to the monitor in order to record the electrical signals your heart.

It is important to carry out your regular daily activities whilst wearing the monitor in order to get a true recording over a 7 or 28 day period.

You will be asked to keep a diary to record any symptoms you may feel whilst wearing the monitor and identify the activity you were doing at this time and for how long. You will be able to take off the monitor to have a bath or shower however you will need to wear the monitor overnight and advice will be given about this at the time of fitting.

After either 7 or 28 days the monitor is removed and the data is analysed along with the information from your diary. This analysis evaluates the type and amount of any irregular heartbeats during the time you were wearing the monitor.



You will be asked to stay for a few minutes after the monitor is removed so our technicians can check through the data.

## Echocardiogram

An echocardiogram (ECHO) is a non-invasive procedure which is used to assess the heart's function and structure.

An ECHO takes around 30-40 minutes to complete.

You will be asked to remove your clothing above the waist (a gown will be provided). During this time a small probe with a small amount of gel is placed on your chest at different locations. The scan takes pictures of your heart using sound waves. You will hear sounds during the test which is completely normal.

**If you require a physiologist who is the same gender as yourself to perform your scan, please contact the department prior to your appointment so we can accommodate this.**

After the scan, a report is written by the technicians who will examine the images taken during the scan. They provide information on the size and shape of your heart, its ability to pump blood around the body, and how the heart valves are working.



## Exercise Tolerance Test

An Exercise Tolerance Test (ETT) is used to record your heart's electrical activity during exercise.

The test is used to create stress on your heart during exercise, and identifies any abnormalities that are not apparent at rest and takes about 30 to 40 minutes. An example of this are partial blockages in the coronary arteries.

You will be asked to remove your clothing above the waist and ECG sticky electrodes will be placed on your chest to record your heart beats. A gown will be provided.

During the test you will be asked to walk on a treadmill for a length of time of up to 21 minutes, but this is determined by the physiologist during the test. The exercise begins on a relatively easy level, and progressively becomes more difficult, creating

more stress on the heart.

Certain factors are recorded and measured at frequent intervals during and after your test;

- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- ECG



## What happens after your test?

**Our staff are not able to give you any information on the results of your test.**

All results and relevant information will be forwarded to the referring Doctor who will contact you in reference to these results.

If you have not heard anything within **2-3 weeks** of your test, then contact your GP or referring Doctor and ask if your results have been received.



## Contact us

There are ways that you can contact us:

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust  
Hardwick Lane  
Bury St. Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 2QZ

Main hospital: 01284 713000

Cardiology Department: 01284 712536

Email: [www.wsh.nhs.uk](http://www.wsh.nhs.uk)

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

