

Transthoracic echocardiograms during COVID-19 pandemic

Those with health conditions that may increase risk of COVID-19 comorbidity should seek early advice from occupational health

Establish infection risk of patient (Category 1-3)

Is there a FIT tested sonographer available? (CAT1 and 2)

Ideally use dedicated echo machine

Use dedicated echo gel

Recommend sterile probe cover

If using portable echo remove from cart and place on a surgical trolley (take power lead)

Do not take any non essential items (e.g. pens / bleeps / guidelines)

Know your trusts infection control policy. Should you have full PPE?
CAT 1 & 2: Recommend Level II PPE: Fit checked filtering face piece class 3 (FFP 3) respirator, eye protection, hat, long sleeved fluid repellent gown covering arms and body, plastic apron, gloves, and wipeable shoes.

CAT3: Recommend fluid resistant surgical mask / plastic apron / gloves

Ideally scan patient at bedside. Clean hands & equipment prior to entering the bay

Aim is to reduce potential exposure of operator to high viral load Put on all appropriate PPE before you enter the bay
Have the patient wear a surgical mask as well
Aim to reduce scanning time, avoid breath holding

Limit imaging to answer clinical question

A Level 1 BSE scan should be sufficient in most cases (biventricular function and major structural valve disease)

No ECG. Record time loops. Do not measure during scan.

Finish scan, remove PPE (follow PPE guidelines) clean down machine, wash hands & leave the bay to report

Upload images and report

CAT1: Confirmed

CAT2: Suspected

CAT3: Low risk - either:

A. Confirmed negative or

B. No risk factors : new persistent cough / fever /contact with person with symptoms or COVID +VE in last 2 weeks

Echo Request

- Requested by consultant
- Triage: will echo alter immediate management /can it be deferred? (discuss with cardiologist on call if needed).
- Plan ahead your scan. What views are key?
- All requests for repeat echo should be consultant to consultant

Minimise patient exposure to non ward staff:

Is there a suitably accredited clinician/sonographer on the ward of the patient who can undertake some scans?

Keep a secure departmental log of patient and sonographer details in case contact tracing is needed

If more than one scan to be performed, put new PPE on and perform next scan

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