

Contrast enhanced ultrasound scan

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide general information about your contrast enhanced ultrasound examination. You should find answers to most of your queries here, however, if after reading this leaflet you still have any questions or concerns, please discuss with the radiographer or sonographer performing your scan on the day.

What is a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan?

This scan is like a standard ultrasound scan but has the additional use of a contrast to improve the imaging (pictures) taken. The contrast is called SonoVue[®] and consists of saline solution and gas-filled spheres called “microbubbles”. It is given as an intravenous injection into your hand or arm. The contrast does not contain any iodine or radiation and is very safe.

Why do I need a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan?

You may have had a recent ultrasound examination, computerised tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. The most common reason for having a contrast ultrasound scan is to get more information about a part of your body that has not been clearly visualised by using alternative standard imaging. The contrast enhanced ultrasound helps us provide a more accurate diagnosis of normal anatomy, or if there is something abnormal that might need treatment.

How is the procedure done?

The scan will take place in the ultrasound department. On arrival, you will be taken into the ultrasound room where a radiologist or sonographer will explain the procedure. If you have any questions, please ask before the scan.

You will be asked to lie down on the ultrasound couch and move some of your clothes out of the way of the area to be scanned. A water-soluble gel will be put on your skin and the ultrasound probe will be moved applying a gentle pressure.

As part of the scan, you will be given an intravenous injection of SonoVue[®] into your hand or arm. During the scan you might be given a second dose of SonoVue[®] if we need a clearer image of the area in question. The flow of contrast makes the blood vessels and organs show more clearly on the scan images.

Are there any complications or side effects?

Please call the radiology department before your appointment (the number will be in your appointment letter) if you:

- are pregnant
- have a pulmonary shunt
- have a persistent ventricular septal defect (VSD)
- had a previous allergic reaction to an ultrasound contrast
- had a previous serious allergic reaction to any medicines, injections or anaesthetics
- have ever experienced allergic reactions to laxatives and/or face creams
- you are asthmatic
- currently on a low salt diet

There are a small number of known side effects that could occur following a SonoVue® injection:

- There is a very small risk that the injection area might bleed. If you have any concerns regarding pain or bleeding, please contact your doctor for advice.
- There is a small risk of an allergic reaction. There is an approximately 1:1000 risk of a mild reaction and a 1:10,000 risk of a severe reaction.

Please inform the radiologist or sonographer performing the scan if you experience any of the following during the scan:

- Unusual taste in the mouth
- Tingling or numbness in the arms, legs, hands or feet
- A warm feeling throughout your body
- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Difficulty breathing or tightness in the chest.

It is very important that you inform the radiologist or sonographer if you feel unusual. We might have to give you medication to stop the side effects.

Do I need to prepare for my contrast enhanced ultrasound scan?

There is no special preparation needed before the scan. If fasting is required prior to the scan, this will be outlined in your appointment letter.

What happens after the scan?

After the scan is finished, SonoVue® will leave your body easily in 3-5 minutes by simply breathing out. You will be asked to stay in the department for another 20 minutes to make sure you have not developed any reactions and are feeling well to go home. You can drive home after the scan.

Audit and research

As this is a new procedure implemented in this Trust, with your permission we will use your scan information for audit and research purposes to improve the quality of service provision and patient care.

Further information

If you have any further questions or concerns about your contrast enhanced ultrasound scan, please call the Ultrasound Department on the telephone number shown on page 3.

Useful contact details

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk
- Telephone 01438 314333

Ultrasound Department, Lister Hospital:

- Website www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/services/radiology/
- Telephone 01438 284030

Leaflet information

You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.

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