

Information about a Transoesophageal Echocardiogram (TOE)

What is a TOE?

A transoesophageal echocardiogram (TOE) is a test that allows us to take detailed images of your heart using ultrasound. The technology is similar to that for a standard ultrasound examination and will show us in more detail the structure and function of the heart muscle and valves.

Why do I need a TOE?

This test will help the doctor make an accurate diagnosis of the heart's structure & function and so guide decisions about the type of treatment that may be required. (e.g. in deciding whether a heart valve can be repaired or needs replacement)

What are the risks of having a TOE?

Although TOE is a straightforward & safe procedure, there are some associated risks. Complications can include:

- There is a risk of perforation (tear) of the oesophagus 0.5% or 1:2000)
- Risk of damage to your teeth, particularly if they are loose or capped. (This is minimised by using the plastic mouth guard)

What happens on the day of the TOE?

You will have received a time for you to attend for the procedure during your pre-assessment.

You will be advised what time to stop eating and drinking at.

You should take your usual medications as normal in the morning.

If you have diabetes you should take your medication/insulin as normal.

If you are currently taking warfarin you should continue to take this as normal but we will need to take blood to check your INR when you arrive and await the result before going ahead with the procedure.

You should bring a dressing gown and slippers. We will provide you with a gown prior to the procedure. It is also advisable to bring a book/newspaper as you may have to wait a while before your procedure.

We advise you not to bring any valuables into the hospital with you and remove all jewellery, except if you wear a wedding ring. The hospital will not accept responsibility for the safe keeping of any property.

When you arrive you will be greeted by your nurse who will check your blood pressure, oxygen levels, temperature and your pulse. Your blood glucose level will be checked if you have diabetes.

A plastic needle (cannula) will be inserted into a vein in your hand/arm. This will be used to inject any sedation which may be required during the procedure. This will remain in place until after your TOE.

What happens when I have the TOE?

Before your procedure you will be seen by the consultant who will perform the TOE. The doctor will make sure you fully understand the procedure and you will have to sign a consent form. **If you have any questions or do not understand something, do not be afraid to ask.**

When the time arrives for your TOE, you will be transferred to another room where the procedure will take place.

If you have dentures & spectacles these will need to be removed

You will usually receive a dose of sedative (MIDAZOLAM). This will help you relax during the procedure and you may not recall the procedure afterwards.

We may also spray the back of your throat with a local anaesthetic spray.

We will monitor your blood pressure, pulse and blood oxygen levels throughout the procedure.

We will ask you to lie comfortably on your left side. The nurse will place a mouth guard between your teeth (to protect the delicate probe).

We will also give you oxygen through a nasal mask during the procedure.

When you are sufficiently sedated we will gently pass the probe across the back of the throat and into the oesophagus where we can collect the images. **The procedure usually takes about 30-40 minutes.**

What happens after the TOE?

You will be returned to the recovery ward where we will continue to monitor your Blood Pressure and pulse regularly.

If you have diabetes we will also monitor your blood sugar levels.

If you have had throat spray you will have a gargle test after 30mins to ensure you can swallow normally. You may then have a drink and light snack.

You may have a sore throat for the next couple of days.

When you feel ready you may get up & dressed.

The consultant who performed the procedure will discuss the results of the test and any further treatment that may be required before you go home.

Please take this opportunity to discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

You will need to arrange for someone to collect you and drive you home and stay with you overnight as you may still be under the influence of the sedation for the next 24 hrs.

You must not operate machinery (including a kettle or oven), sign legal documents or drink alcohol during this time.

Cardiac Angiography Suite/Cardiac Investigations

Situated on the first floor at Peterborough City Hospital

Telephone number (01733) 673793.