

Definity Contrast

Information for patients and families

ECG Department
30 Bond Street
Room 7-075, Queen Wing
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W8
(416) 864-5075

What is Definity contrast?

Sometimes it may be difficult to get clear pictures of your heart during an ultrasound. Your cardiologist may want to use a contrast agent to see your heart better. A contrast agent is something that is injected into your blood to help show better pictures.

The contrast agent that we use is called Definity contrast. This is made up of tiny gas filled bubbles that reflect the sound waves. Using this contrast helps us to see the area between your blood and heart muscle.

The Definity contrast is not similar to x-ray dyes. It is not iodine based. It does not affect your kidneys. It is a gas that you will exhale from your body.

How is it given?

The contrast is always given by a doctor with specialized training in ultrasound or someone under their direct supervision. The doctor will inject the contrast into a vein in your arm or hand. They do this using an intravenous (IV) catheter. It will then take an extra 5 minutes to take pictures. When the pictures are done, we will remove the IV.

Are there any side effects?

One patient in 10,000 may have an allergic reaction to this contrast. A common sign that you are having a reaction is getting a rash around the injection site. If this happens, we will give you medication to treat the reaction. Then we will watch you in the recovery area.

Sometimes patients get lower back pain or nausea. These reactions disappear when you exhale the gas out of your body.

Who should not use the contrast?

This contrast agent is not safe for:

- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Patients with large holes within the heart chambers that allow blood to flow

from the right to the left side of the heart. We will check for this during the first part of the examination.

For questions or concerns

Please let us know if you have any question or concerns.

St. Michael's Echocardiography Lab

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