

Echo contrast/Ultrasound Enhancer

Information for patients and families

What is Ultrasound Enhancer/Echo contrast?

Sometimes it may be difficult to get clear pictures of your heart during an ultrasound. The Ultrasound Technologist may suggest using an ultrasound image enhancing agent to see your heart better. An image enhancing agent is something that is injected into your blood to help show better pictures.

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

Note this agent is not similar to x-ray contrasts or dyes. It is not iodine based. It does not affect your kidneys or liver. It is a gas that will naturally leave your body as you breathe.

How is Ultrasound Enhancer given?

The agent is given by nursing staff, technologists or physicians. They will inject the agent 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-like reaction. 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 observe you prior to you leaving.

Sometimes patients get a headache or lower back pain. These reactions disappear when you exhale the gas from your body.

Who should not receive Ultrasound Enhancer?

- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding
- Children, under 5 years old
- Those who have had prior reactions to contrast agents. Please inform us if this is the case.

You may be asked to stay for 10-15 minutes after your echo for observation.

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

For more information on safety, risks and benefits visit <http://icus-society.org/general-public/>

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.