



Cardiology

The Cardiology Department provides a wide range of diagnostic invasive and non-invasive procedures. This service caters for inpatients, outpatients and referrals from other hospitals and GPs by appointment.

NON-INVASIVE PROCEDURES INCLUDE:

ECG (Electrocardiograph)

A routine painless test that records the electrical activity of the heart.

Echocardiograph

This test involves the use of high-frequency sound waves, which are directed through the body by a transducer to create an image of the heart and is a painless means of giving information about the anatomy and physiology of the heart and great vessels. Doppler Ultrasound also forms part of the test in which a special microphone is used to assess the blood flow in different parts of the heart.

Exercise Stress Test

This test can diagnose and assess suspected or known coronary artery disease and involves the recording of the ECG and blood pressure while walking on a treadmill. GP-referred stress tests are performed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, while a Cardiologist is on site. A completed Exercise Stress booking form must accompany the patient. These forms may be obtained from Cardiology Administration. It is advisable to wear comfortable clothing and footwear for this test.

24-hour BP (Blood Pressure) Monitor

This test assesses and evaluates hypertension (i.e. high blood pressure) and suspected hypertension and hypotension (i.e. low blood pressure) and involves wearing a monitor that automatically records your blood pressure over a 24-hour period. It is recommended to wear a loose fitting top for the duration of this test.

Ambulatory Monitoring

- **Holter Monitoring** – this monitor continuously records the ECG over a 24-hour period or longer to assess the rhythm of your heart and/or the function of an implanted pacemaker. Our digital holter system is the most advanced holter recorder available. The monitors are compact, lightweight and more patient friendly than any previous models.
- **Patient Activated (Event) Monitoring** – this monitor records the ECG at a time when you experience an event (symptom) intermittently and is worn over a weekly period.

Pacemaker / ICD (Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator) follow-up check

Continuous follow-up of your pacemaker / ICD at regular intervals is essential to determine if the programmed settings are at their optimum. This is a non-invasive test and involves a small device being placed over your pacemaker to check its function. Appointments for the



pacemaker clinic are arranged post-implantation of the device and at regular intervals thereafter, or at the request of a Cardiologist.

INVASIVE PROCEDURES INCLUDE:

Pacemaker / Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) Implantation

A pacemaker / ICD is a device implanted in your chest that sends electrical impulses to the heart muscle to maintain suitable heart rates, when certain abnormalities in your heart rate or rhythm occur. Implantation is minimally invasive surgery, usually carried out under local anaesthesia in the operating room. A mild sedative is given for relaxation. The Cardiologist will numb a small area just below the collarbone, and will then make a small incision through which the lead(s) is guided into the heart through a vein. This is done with the help of X-Rays. The device is then securely attached under the skin.

The device will be checked and any necessary adjustments will be made before you go home.

Transoesophageal Echocardiography

This provides excellent definition of the heart and great vessels and is performed to demonstrate cardiac structure and function when poor quality views on echo are obtained and/or when further information is necessary e.g. to rule out a clot. Sedation may be given for relaxation and the ultrasound probe is passed through the mouth into the oesophagus so that views of your heart can be obtained. Fasting from midnight the night before the procedure is required. The test will involve at least a stay in the Day Ward and continued fasting for approximately 2 hours post procedure. An arrangement should be made for a relative/friend to bring you home. A Cardiologist may request this procedure.

Access to Services:

The Cardiology service is available to both inpatients and outpatients (by appointment) as follows:

- Consultant referral within the hospital
- Outpatient Consultant referral
- Outpatient GP referral
- Transfer/referral from other hospitals

Insurance Cover

The majority of VHI and Quinn plans cover the cost of outpatient echoes and payments are made by these insurance companies directly to the hospital. All cardiology tests carried out as an inpatient are fully covered by VHI and Quinn. Details of charges for all other tests are available on request from Cardiology Administration.