

Cardiology outpatient appointments during the pandemic

This leaflet gives more information about your child's outpatient appointment during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. If you have any questions or concerns about this appointment, please contact us (details at the end of this leaflet).

Do you need to wear a mask?

If your child is over the age of 11, we encourage them to wear a face covering if they feel comfortable to do so.

We expect all adults to wear them, in line with Government guidance. If you do not have one, they are provided at the main entrances of Evelina London Children's Hospital and St Thomas Hospital.

Can you bring someone with you?

Due to the pandemic we are only allowing **one** parent or guardian to accompany a child to their appointment. Please be aware that any extra visitors are not allowed, and they will be asked to wait outside of the hospital to make sure social distancing is maintained. This includes other family members. We will try to give you enough notice of the appointment so that childcare arrangements can be made.

We understand this may be a difficult for some of our families, particularly in the event of a diagnosis of congenital heart disease. We are allowing you to audio or video call during the consultation if you want to have a second parent/guardian join virtually. This is to keep you, your family and our staff safe.

Where do you need to go?

The appointment will take place in the Cardiology Outpatient Department, Walrus Reception, 1st floor, Evelina London.

How long will the appointment take?

Your child's appointment may take up to 2 hours.

All of our appointments are carefully planned to allow for social distancing, so please make sure you arrive up to **15 minutes** early for your appointment. This is because there is restricted seating in our waiting area. We also ask you not to be late, as this can make other patients' appointments late too. Please think about this when you are making travel arrangements for your child's appointment.

What happens during the appointment?

Due to the pandemic we are trying to carry out medical consultations virtually where possible. We will only ask you to come to the hospital for a face-to-face appointment if your child needs specialist cardiac imaging.

During the face-to-face appointment you will meet members of our team. This will include our outpatient nursing team who will record your child's observations (pulse, blood pressure, height and weight). You might also meet a specialist physiologist or a member of our cardiology medical team, to have an echocardiogram or an electrocardiogram (ECG).

Your child will be seen by a member of our medical team unless you are just coming in for some tests. You might see one of our cardiologists, or you may have a virtual consultation at another time. This will be detailed on your appointment letter and confirmed at the time of booking.

You might notice that our staff look a bit different. They will be wearing masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE). Please don't worry if we look a bit silly, all our staff are still really friendly and always try to make you happy and comfortable.

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of the heart. It is painless, non-invasive and is very accurate in diagnosing heart problems. It lets us see very detailed features of congenital (present from birth) heart disease. This takes about 20 minutes. A cold jelly will be put on the chest to help us get lots of pictures of the heart from different angles.

Preparation

All patients are offered a gown to change into, a bra may be left on however, undone from the back (sports bras and crop tops would need to be removed).

What is an ECG?

This is a simple test to check your child's heart rhythm and electrical activity. Sensors are placed on the skin to detect the electrical signals produced by your heart each time it beats. The test will use 10 stickers on the arms, legs and chest, and takes about five minutes.

Preparation

- It is helpful to wear things that are easy to take off (babygrows which button down or open at the side).
- Do not use moisturiser, oil or cream the skin on the day of the test, as this will stop the stickers staying on.

What if a heart problem is detected?

If a heart condition is discovered, it will be explained to you. All available options will be discussed, as well as any other tests that may be needed. A clinical nurse specialist will be available to give support, as well as written information to take away (including their contact details).

What do you need to bring with you?

Please bring all medications your child takes regularly. If your child is under five years old, please bring their red book.

Coronavirus symptoms

Do not come to your appointment if you or anyone in your household has any coronavirus-related symptoms. Please get in touch with us immediately to re-arrange your appointment, **t:** 020 7188 1142. Symptoms include:

- **a high temperature** (you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to take your temperature))
- **a new, continuous cough** (coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual))
- **a loss or change to your senses of smell or taste** (you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal).

Please check, **w:** www.nhs.uk/coronavirus for the latest information on coronavirus symptoms.

Useful sources of information

Evelina London cardiology service –

w: www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/our-services/hospital/heart-services/overview.aspx

ECHO (Evelina Children's Heart Organisation). We support Evelina London patients from diagnosis, through treatment and care, or bereavement. **t:** 07715 208077

w: www.echo-evelina.org.uk **e:** admin@echo-evelina.org.uk

Little Hearts Matter, for families of children born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome and any other single ventricle condition. **t:** 0121 455 8982 (24 hours), **w:** www.lhm.org.uk

e: info@lhm.org.uk

Children's Heart Federation, giving information for parents or carers. **Freephone:** 0808 808 5000, Monday to Friday 9.30am-9.30pm **w:** www.chfed.org.uk

British Heart Foundation: **w:** www.bhf.org.uk

Medicines for Children, **w:** www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your procedure, please contact the appointments team, **t:** 020 7188 4000, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm,
e: PaediatricAppointmentsCardiology@gstt.nhs.uk

Cardiac outreach nurse team, **t:** 020 7188 84546, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

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A list of sources is available on request