

Healthcare associated infections

Healthcare-associated infections are infections that people can develop while receiving care in a healthcare setting. They are usually spread by germs (bacteria or viruses) that can be transferred through contact with people, equipment, or surfaces.

For most people having a **transthoracic echocardiogram (a non-invasive ultrasound scan of the heart)**, the risk of infection is **very low** because the procedure does not involve breaking the skin.

Infection risk with a transthoracic echocardiogram

A TTE is considered a **safe, non-invasive procedure**. There are:

- No needles or surgical instruments involved
- No entry into the body
- Minimal risk of infection

However, as with all healthcare interactions, precautions are taken to prevent any potential spread of germs.

How we minimise infection risk

1. Hand hygiene

- Staff clean their hands thoroughly before and after every patient contact
- Hand hygiene follows guidelines from organisations like the World Health Organization and Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

2. Cleaning of equipment

- Ultrasound probes and machines are cleaned and disinfected between every patient
- Only approved disinfectants are used

3. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Staff may wear gloves when appropriate
- Additional PPE (such as masks) may be used based on current infection control guidelines

4. Clean environment

- Examination rooms and surfaces are cleaned regularly
- Linen is changed between patients

A transthoracic echocardiogram is a **low-risk procedure**, and strict infection control practices are in place to protect both patients and healthcare workers.