

Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO) Work Up

A patent foramen ovale is a flap-like portion of the atrial septum, which separates the left and right chambers of the heart. The PFO usually closes at birth but can remain unsealed in approximately 25% of the population. In most cases, a PFO is a normal finding however it can be a relevant finding in young patients with unexplained stroke or transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs).

To accurately assess for the presence of a PFO, the following are performed:

Comprehensive Echo

[View Transthoracic Echo](#)

Agitated Saline Contrast Study

A cannula is placed in your arm and a small amount of saline solution (salty water) is injected while asking you to perform different breathing exercises whilst some imaging is performed.

+/- Transcranial Doppler Study

This involves using a small ultrasound transducer on the side of your head and imaging is performed during the saline injections.

Preparation

Nil.

Test Duration

Approximately 90 minutes.

Appointment

Booking required. Please phone (07) 3847 4422.