

Having an Ultrasound Scan



At
one of our sites

What is an Ultrasound Examination?

An ultrasound scan is a test that uses high frequency sound waves to create images of the body. It can provide accurate information about the size, shape and structure of different parts of the body, as well as blood flow.

Ultrasound is a very commonly used method of imaging and has no known harmful effects. Depending on the area being examined you may be asked to starve for up to six hours before the examination time. For other examinations you may be asked to fill your bladder. It is important to follow any preparation instructions you are given carefully.

If you are taking prescribed medication you should continue unless instructed otherwise. If you have any concerns about any medication you are taking please contact your doctor, clinician or the Global Clinic, where further guidance can be given.

Who will perform my examination?

Your examination will be performed by either a Consultant Radiologist or an Advanced Practitioner in ultrasound.

What does an ultrasound examination involve?

You will be called into the ultrasound room and your identity will be checked. Depending on the examination being performed, you may be asked to remove some clothing or change into a gown. You will be asked to lie down or sit up on a couch and the lights will be dimmed to allow a clear view of the screen.

Some clear gel will be spread on the area of your body being examined and the operator will place a probe on your skin over the area being scanned.

Pulses of ultrasound are sent from the probe through the skin into your body; the ultrasound waves then echo (or bounce back) from the structures being imaged and a computer reconstructs the sound waves into images. The probe will be moved over the skin surface so the operator can obtain views from different angles in order to attain the necessary views required. The operator may ask you to hold your breath at times to help them see the images more clearly.

An ultrasound examination should not be painful, but some patients may find it a little uncomfortable at times. Selected images are saved as a record of the examination.

As a guide, an ultrasound examination usually takes approximately 15-30 minutes but some may take longer depending on the areas being examined.

What happens after your examination?

After your examination you will be asked to wipe the gel off your body and then be allowed to get dressed. You will then be free to leave the clinic. If you have been asked to starve for the examination you will now be free to eat and drink normally, and if you have been asked to fill your bladder, you will now be able to go to the toilet.

The operator will review the images taken and write a report of their findings. This will be forwarded to the doctor who requested the examination. You will need to make an appointment with your doctor or clinician to discuss the findings of your ultrasound examination.

Ultrasound can be used for imaging a variety of areas including:

- **Heart** - to detect abnormalities of the heart structures
- **Musculo-skeletal** - diagnoses tears in muscles and tendons, and assesses injury to ligaments and soft tissue
- **Pregnancy** - assesses the fetal development and wellbeing during the various stages of pregnancy

- **Breast** - to help identify any suspicious lump
- **General** - helps identify abnormalities in the thyroid gland, lymph nodes, ovaries, prostate and testes
- **Doppler ultrasound** - can be used to look for any narrowing or blockages in veins and arteries
- **Gynaecological** - examines the uterus and the ovaries, looking for possible fibroids or cysts
- **Abdomen** - examines organs such as the liver and gallbladder, looking for such things as tumours and gallstones

All enquires please call 01603 812266

Important Information

This is a general patient information leaflet only.

The information that you are given may be different to that provided here. This is because the information given to you is tailor made to your individual treatment.

It is very important that you follow the instructions that are given by your clinician.