

Patient information leaflet

Ultrasound Abdomen

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your abdominal ultrasound scan. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

If, for any reason, you are unable to attend or no longer require this appointment, please telephone the booking team on the number at the end of this letter.

This will avoid undue delay and will help us to keep our waiting list as short as possible.

Please note that children are not allowed in the scan rooms and we are unable to offer supervision of children in the waiting room. If you are having difficulties coordinating childcare please contact the booking team.

Staff are not permitted to supervise children so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your scan being rescheduled.

Please let us know well before your appointment if you would like to request staff of a specific gender. We may not be able to meet your requirements on the day. Your appointment may have to be rescheduled to facilitate this.

What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound examinations (scans) are tests which use high-pitched sound waves and specialist equipment to produce an image. They are particularly good at looking at some of the softer structures in our body without using ionizing radiation. The examination is harmless and should be painless. To perform the ultrasound scan we will put ultrasound gel on the skin and move a small probe over the area of interest.

Why do I need an abdominal ultrasound scan?

The scan may help your doctor identify the cause of your symptoms or help them rule out conditions that could cause your symptoms. It may also be used to monitor certain conditions.

Preparing for your procedure

You will need to fast before the scan, please ensure you are familiar with the eating and drinking instructions below.

Please contact the booking team if you plan to use hospital transport, require a hoist transfer or think you may need extra support for this test.

If you have diabetes, you should have received an early morning appointment or a time specifically suited to your routine and specific instructions regarding your medication. If not, please contact the booking team on the number below. They will rearrange your appointment time as appropriate.

If you have been asked not to take your diabetic tablets or insulin, then please make sure you bring them with you. You also may want to bring a snack to eat after your examination.

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Eating and drinking

- Do not eat any food for 6 hours before your appointment time.
- Drink only water / clear fluids (no milk) for the 6 hours before your appointment time.

Medication

Please discuss any diabetes medication with the booking team.

For any other regular medication, please take it as usual unless instructed otherwise.

Getting to us

We have three hospital sites;

Please check your letter to ensure you attend the correct location.

Our addresses are;

The Princess Alexandra Hospital
Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX

St Margaret's Hospital
The Plain, Epping, Essex, CM16 6TN

Herts and Essex Hospital
Haymeads Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5JH

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the department 5 minutes before your appointment time.

Please go to the reception desk where your details will be checked, you will be asked to wait in the seating area.

Please be mindful that parking on site may be difficult and allow extra time

The day of the procedure

Please ensure you follow the correct preparation.

Preferably wear loose-fitting clothing over the area being scanned.

The procedure

The procedure may be performed by a sonographer or a radiologist, they will explain more about the exam being performed. A radiology department assistant may also be present. Because we are a teaching hospital, there may also be some supervised trainees at your appointment. The team will make every effort to ensure your comfort and dignity.

We have both male and female staff working in the department. If you would like a chaperone for your examination, please let us know when you arrive for your appointment.

We will perform the scan in our ultrasound room which may be dimly lit so that we can see the images produced on the screen more clearly. We will ask you to lie down on a couch and move your clothing away from the area of interest.

Ultrasound gel will be placed on your skin and we will move an ultrasound probe slowly over the area we are scanning. Occasionally, we may need to press quite firmly. Please let us know if you feel pain at any point during the scan.

The scan can take up to 30 minutes, but is often quicker. We will do our best to make sure that you are seen on time, but emergencies may have to take priority on some occasions.

After the procedure

You may eat, drink, and return to your normal daily activities as soon as you wish.

Can I drive after my procedure?

Yes, there are no side effects

Can someone stay with me in hospital?

You may have an adult friend or family member attend with you, but they will usually stay in the waiting area while you have your examination.

If you think you may require extra support from a friend or family member during the scan please discuss this with the Radiologist / sonographer who will be performing the scan or with reception when checking in.

How soon can I return to work?

You may return to work after your scan.

How soon will I get my results?

The results will be sent back to the doctor or healthcare professional who referred you for a Scan, normally within a week.

At your next GP/outpatient appointment, you will be able to discuss the results.

Please note, your results will not normally be discussed with you on the day of the scan.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please **contact the ultrasound booking team on: Telephone 01279 827179, select the option for appointments, then for ultrasound.**

Office hours **09:00-16:00 Mon-Fri** (excluding bank holidays).

There is no answerphone service for ultrasound bookings, patients who ring outside of the opening times are diverted to the Princess Alexandra Hospital Radiology reception desk until 8pm.

If you have a weekend or evening appointment at either of the following hospitals and are delayed, please call the numbers below to speak with the appropriate radiology reception;

St Margaret's Hospital **01279 827038**

Herts and Essex Hospital **01279 827162**

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net or 01279 827211.

Please contact the communications team on paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.