

Patient information

Pelvic Ultrasound (transabdominal and transvaginal)

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your 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 produced by 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.

A pelvic scan commonly assesses the womb and ovaries.

Why do I need an ultrasound?

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

The scan will probably consist of two components, firstly by scanning over your tummy whilst your bladder is full and secondly by performing a vaginal scan whilst your bladder is empty.

You will need to arrive for your appointment with a full bladder, please see instructions below.

If you have a vaginal pessary inserted, have never had sexual intercourse or are unable to tolerate internal examinations please contact the booking team on the number above for further information.

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.

Version 3 | Paula Mattock | Ultrasound | Date ratified: April 2025 | Review date: April 2028



modern • integrated • outstanding

patient at heart • everyday excellence • creative collaboration

Eating and drinking

Please ensure you drink 1 litre of water, or other non-carbonated fluid, 1 hour before your scan time. Please do not empty your bladder once you have started this preparation, although you may wish to empty beforehand.

Medication

Regular medication should be taken as usual.

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 report to the reception desk, your details will be checked and you will be wait in the seating area.

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

The day of the procedure

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

The procedure

The procedure may be performed by a sonographer or a radiologist who will explain the procedure to you and ask you if you are happy to go ahead.

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.

If you would like a chaperone for your examination, please let us know when you arrive for your appointment.

We have both male and female staff working in the department.

We can perform this scan regardless of whether you have a period or are bleeding. If you are using a tampon or menstrual cup please let the operator know.

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 your lower tummy. Ultrasound gel will be placed on your skin and an ultrasound probe will be moved over the area of interest.

When we have finished scanning over your tummy we will direct you to the toilet to empty your bladder and, if being used, remove tampon or menstrual cup.

For the vaginal scan you may be asked to remove some of your outer clothing and will be asked to remove your underwear. You will be given a paper sheet to cover yourself whilst lying on an examination couch.

The vaginal scan is performed using a tube-shaped probe, covered with a latex free cover and gel, which is inserted into the vagina. It will be moved at different angles to look inside the pelvis.

Although this shouldn't usually be painful, occasionally the internal ultrasound probe can be uncomfortable when it is inserted or moved during the test. Tell the person doing the scan if it is difficult for you and they will help you feel more comfortable.

The scan can take up to 25 minutes, but may be less. 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

When the scan is finished, you can wipe off the lubricant with paper towel provided and get dressed. You will be shown the nearest toilet if you need to reinsert a tampon or menstrual cup.

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.

However, if you require extra support please inform the sonographer/radiologist when they are discussing the procedure with you.

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 your

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 experienceteam 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.

