

# Having an Ultrasound scan

## What is an ultrasound?

An ultrasound scan uses high frequency sound waves (that you can't hear) to create an image of the inside of your body. A small handheld probe is put on your skin. It sends out the sound waves, and a computer changes these into pictures on the screen.

Ultrasound scans are very safe and do not use X-rays.

## Preparing for the scan

We may ask you to not have anything to eat or drink 6 hours before your scan or have a full bladder. Please read the appointment letter for more information on how to prepare for your scan.

### Scans of the bladder and pelvis

You will need to drink 1–2 pints of fluid about an hour before your scan. This makes your bladder full, so we can see your bladder and pelvic organs more clearly. Please don't pass urine before the scan. If your bladder isn't full, we may need to rebook your scan.

Routinely, a scan will take on average 20 minutes, but it can be longer depending upon which parts of the body are to be examined.

Please note that children are not allowed in the scan rooms. If a child needs to come with you to your ultrasound appointment, please organise for a responsible adult to supervise them in the waiting area. One visitor is allowed to accompany you for your appointment, however, please note that it may not be appropriate for them to be in the scan room at the time of the examination.

## During the scan

We have both male and female staff working in the department. The procedure may be performed by a Radiologist or a Sonographer. As we are a teaching hospital, there may also be a student present at your appointment. If you are not happy to have a student in the room, then please let the clinician know.

The ultrasound room may be dimly lit so that we can see the images produced on the screen more clearly. We may ask you to lie or sit down on a bed. We will then put ultrasound gel on your skin over the area to be scanned and will move an ultrasound transducer (a small probe) slowly over your skin. The scan should be painless but please let us know if you feel uncomfortable at any point during the scan.

## Internal (transvaginal) scans

Sometimes we need to look more closely at the womb and ovaries. For this, a small probe is gently put inside the vagina. Your GP should have discussed internal (transvaginal) scan with you during your appointment with them and at the point of their referral for it.

- We will ask for your permission before this scan
- You will be asked to empty your bladder first by going to the toilet
- You will undress below the waist and lie on the couch
- The probe is cleaned, covered, and has lubricating jelly on it so it is more comfortable
- The person doing the scan will move the probe gently to get the best view
- This may feel a little uncomfortable but should not be painful

Sonographers always have a chaperone. You might be scanned by a male sonographer. If you prefer to be scanned by a female sonographer, you must let us know prior to your scan by calling the team on 01438 284030. A female sonographer might not be available on the day, and prior arrangements might need to be made in order not to delay your scan

## When will I get my results?

We will review your images after the scan. We will then send the results to the doctor who asked for the scan. Staff will not be able to give you any results immediately after the examination.

## Useful contact details

### East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust:

- Website [www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk)
- Telephone 01438 314333

### Radiology Department

- Lister Hospital, Coreys Mill Lane, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 4AB
- Telephone: 01438 284030

## Leaflet information

**You can request this information in a different format or another language; please speak to your doctor or nurse.**

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