

Having a Transvaginal Ultrasound Scan

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having an ultrasound scan. It explains how the test is done, what to expect, and what the possible risks are.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a Transvaginal Ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound is a way of looking inside your body to help diagnose medical conditions and guide treatment. An ultrasound scanner uses high-frequency sound waves and computers to produce pictures of the organs and other structures inside the body, which can be viewed on a computer monitor. Transvaginal Pelvic ultrasound is particularly useful to evaluate the uterus, and the ovaries. It is the best method of assessing the uterine lining (endometrium) and the developing foetus in pregnant women.

How does it work?

The ultrasound examination is performed by a Sonographer, who is a health professional highly trained to carry out and report these scans, or by a Radiologist, who is a doctor specially trained to carry out imaging examinations and to interpret the images.

The Sonographer or Radiologist uses a hand-held device called a transducer, which transmits the sound waves into your body. For a transvaginal scan the transducer is covered with a sterile cover and is inserted into the vagina. The sound waves are reflected back to the transducer from the different structures and tissues inside the pelvis. The returning sound waves are converted by a computer into a moving image of the internal structures of the body, and the images are displayed on a computer screen.



What do I need to do before my scan?

Dietary preparation.

You may need to drink fluids to fill the bladder for an initial scan of the pelvis through the skin of the lower abdomen. If you would prefer to do this on arrival at the hospital, please plan to arrive approximately 30 minutes before your appointment time. You will then be asked to empty the bladder for a transvaginal scan.

Taking tablets and medicines

You should continue to take all your normal medication.

Where do I go when I arrive at the hospital?

Please report to the reception desk in PAW Ultrasound (D3), or the Radiology main department (B7), with your appointment letter 10 minutes before your appointment time. Please click on the following link for a site map of the hospital:

http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/finding/documents/RUH_directory_map.pdf

You will be asked to sit in the waiting area until called by a member of staff. A member of the team will explain the test and answer any questions.

You should wear clothing that allows easy access to the area that is being examined. You will be able to undress in private & will be provided with a modesty towel.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

You may bring a relative or friend with you to the appointment and, if you wish, they will usually be able to accompany you in the examination room.

If you need an interpreter or a chaperone, please tell us when you receive your appointment so that we can arrange this. If you would prefer a female radiologist or sonographer to perform the scan please contact us.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be taken into the Ultrasound Scanning Room and asked to lie down on the examination couch. The area to be examined is exposed while the rest of the body is covered. The lighting in the room is usually dimmed in order to see the pictures more clearly. An initial scan of your pelvis may be performed through the skin of your lower abdomen.

If a transvaginal scan is to be performed you will be asked to ensure that your bladder is empty. This scan is performed with a long narrow cylindrical "transducer" (a smooth hand held device) which has a sterile protective cover placed over it. The Radiologist / sonographer will apply clear gel to the transducer before gently inserting it into the vagina. This positions the transducer close to the uterus and ovaries in order to obtain very clear high resolution images, which are displayed on the computer screen. The Radiologist / sonographer will record still photographs from the moving images on the screen.

The examination should not be painful but if you experience any discomfort, you should inform the Radiologist / sonographer immediately.

The examination takes approximately 10-20 minutes to perform.

What happens after the scan?

When the examination is finished you will be given paper towel to wipe off any gel and you will be able to dress and leave immediately.

Are there any risks?

Ultrasound scanning does not use ionizing radiation (x-rays) and is considered a very safe test.

Tenderness in the area that has been examined is uncommon and usually resolves within a few hours of the examination. Occasionally there may be minor vaginal bleeding.

How do I get my results?

The Radiologist / sonographer who performed the examination will review the images and send a report to your doctor. Your GP or hospital Consultant who referred you for the test will see you to discuss the results.

Any questions?

We will do our best to make your visit as comfortable and stress free as possible. If you have any questions or suggestions for us, please contact Ultrasound appointments on 01225 824568/824380 (PAW Ultrasound) or 01225 825529/825637 (Main department).

More information

For general information about Radiology departments, visit The Royal College of Radiologists' website: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/public-and-media/what-expect-when>

How do I make a comment about my examination?

If you have any concerns or suggestions following your examination, please contact the [Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\)](#),
Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG.
Email: ruh-tr.PatientAdviceandLiaisonService@nhs.net
Tel: 01225 821655 or 01225 826319