

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan gives a picture of the inside of the body using sound waves. These cannot be heard by the human ear. A small sensor is moved over the skin to view the internal organs from different angles and the pictures are displayed on a screen.

Ultrasound scans are used to look at many different parts of the body.

How long will it take?

The scan usually takes about 10 to 15 minutes. Your total time in the department is likely to be about 30 to 40 minutes.

Are there any risks?

There are no known risks and ultrasound is considered to be very safe.

Do I need to make any special preparations?

When the Referral Booking Service call you to arrange your appointment, they will have explained to you what preparation is required for your ultrasound examination. This will be also be explained in your appointment confirmation letter. If you have forgotten what preparations you have to make, please call the Referral Booking Service on 0845 680 2534. You should tell the sonographer in advance if you have had a similar ultrasound within the last six months.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, you can bring a relative or friend with you for your scan. Please note however we do not have the facilities to look after children.

When you arrive

On arrival you should report to the reception desk as per your directions to the surgery. Please refer to your appointment confirmation letter for details of who to ask for at the surgery.

Please remember that, if you have been asked to attend with a full bladder, it is important that you do not use the toilet until after the examination. If you start to feel uncomfortable please tell the surgery reception.

Who will I see?

A sonographer and their admin assistant will look after you.

What happens during the scan?

The sonographer will explain the ultrasound procedure to you. You will be advised if you have to remove any clothes before the scan, in which case you will be asked to do so behind a screen in the examination room.

After a few moments you will be asked to lie down on a couch and the lights in the room will be dimmed so that the pictures on the screen can be seen more clearly. A gel will be applied to your skin over the area to be scanned - this allows the sensor to slide easily over the skin.

You may be asked to lie on your back, to turn on to your side, to lie flat on your stomach or even to stand during the examination. There is usually help for those who find this difficult. You may be asked to take deep breaths and to hold your breath for a few moments. If you are having a pelvic ultrasound and your bladder is not full enough, you may be offered an internal scan. The procedure for this will be explained by the sonographer at the time of the scan.

If your bladder is uncomfortably full you should tell the sonographer, so that the examination can be completed as quickly as possible.

The sonographer will sit or stand beside you, slowly moving the sensor over your skin while viewing the images on the screen. Selected images will be saved so that they can be viewed later.

Will it be uncomfortable?

Ultrasound itself does not cause any pain or discomfort. If a full bladder is required, you may be a bit uncomfortable for a short time. The sonographer will need to press on the skin surface over your stomach and pelvis. This may increase your discomfort for a short time, but only while the scan is being carried out.

When will I get the results?

The sonographer will produce a written report of their findings after your examination which will be forwarded to your referring doctor. Your doctor will then discuss the findings of the report with you and, should it be necessary, plan any treatment or next steps.

Other points

Patients have a choice of providers with whom they can have their ultrasound. Further information can be obtained via admin@partnersip.org.uk

The service is provided by Partners in Practice Suffolk which is owned by various Suffolk GP practices.



ULTRASOUND

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

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