

What is an Ultrasound?

Ultrasound is a picture of part of the inside of the body using sound waves of a frequency above the audible range of the human ear. A small hand-held sensor (probe), which is pressed carefully against the skin surface, generates sound waves and detects echoes reflected back from the surfaces and tissue boundaries of internal organs. The probe can be moved over the skin to view the organs from different angles, with the pictures are displayed on a screen and recorded for subsequent study.

Ultrasound images complement other diagnostic imaging modalities and are widely used for many different parts of the body.



Occasionally ultrasound can be used for intimate examinations; for example the womb or ovaries in women. Sometimes it may be necessary to place an ultrasound probe into the rectum or vagina to look at these small internal structures. If you are having this type of examination the doctor will explain the procedure to you and your consent will be sought.

How should I prepare for the ultrasound scan?

You may be given instructions which will relate to the part of the body to be scanned e.g. you may be asked to drink fluids. ***It is very important that you follow this preparation.***

What happens during the ultrasound examination?

The radiologist will call you into the room when they are ready to start your scan. The procedure will be explained to you and if you need to get changed, they will show you a cubicle where you can change into a gown.

You will be asked to recline on the US table and the lights may be dimmed so that the images on the screen are more clearly seen. A gel will be applied to your skin to allow the probe to slide easily over the area to be scanned, and helps produce clearer pictures.

You may be asked to take deep breaths and hold your breath, or to turn on your side.

How long will it take?

The scan usually takes about 15 minutes depending on what scan has been requested by your referring doctor.

Is the ultrasound scan painful?

Generally, no. Occasionally it may be necessary to apply pressure with the sensor over certain areas to get clearer images of the anatomy being looked at.

Are there any risks?

No. Ultrasound scans do not use radiation to obtain images and is considered to be very safe.

Can I bring a relative or friend with me?

Yes. A family member or friend may be with you during the scan.



When will I get my results?

The consultant radiologist will read your ultrasound scan. Your doctor will receive the results within 48 hours of your exam being completed.