

Having a Transvaginal Ultrasound scan

Information for Patients



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Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having a transvaginal 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 speak to your referring doctor or GP.

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

The Radiologist or Sonographer uses a hand-held device called a transducer, which is moved across the body surface and 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.

Are there any risks?

Ultrasound scanning does not use ionizing radiation (x-rays) and is considered a very safe test. For this reason it is often the preferred imaging test in pregnant patients and children.

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.

What do I need to do to prepare for my scan?

Taking tablets and medicines

You should continue to take all your usual medication as normal.

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.

Reasonable Adjustments

If you need to reschedule or require any reasonable adjustments to support your appointment, please let us know in advance

Chaperone

If you wish to have a chaperone during your examination, please let a member of staff know on the day as soon as you arrive so this can be accommodated.

What happens during the examination?

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 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 to obtain very clear high resolution images, which are displayed on the computer screen. The Radiologist / sonographer will record still pictures 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.

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.

How do I get my results?

The Radiologist / sonographer who performed the examination will review the images and send a report to the doctor who referred you for the examination. Your GP or Consultant 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, please contact our admin team on 01761 422250 or email us at radiology@sulishospital.com