

Information on having an Pelvic Ultrasound Scan

(applies only to transvaginal scans of the female pelvis)

This information sheet is to let you know what to expect regarding your pelvic ultrasound scan.

The scan usually lasts between 10 and 20 minutes.

Do I need to prepare for my scan?

No preparation is needed.

Where will I have my scan done?

Your appointment will be at Derriford Hospital unless otherwise stated. If you are arriving at Derriford by car you should note that parking charges apply and it can take a while to find a space and then walk to the hospital. You should probably allow at least 20 minutes for this and booking in at reception. Because we operate an appointments system, we cannot always guarantee to still scan you on the day if you miss your appointment. The Derriford ultrasound department is on level 6 (the same as the main entrance). From the entrance go up the concourse and turn right by the Body Shop. Please report to the X-Ray West reception desk.

Who will do my scan?

Your examination will be done by one of our highly trained staff. Some are specialist doctors (radiologists) who have trained in ultrasound, others are radiographers with specialist ultrasound postgraduate qualifications. We sometimes have trainees in the department who are learning under supervision. We will always identify trainees to you and give you the option of being scanned instead by regular staff. If you choose this it will not in any way affect your treatment.

What happens?

You will be asked to undress and put on an examination gown and dressing gown. (Dressing gowns are provided but if you prefer you may bring your own.)

It is nowadays the normal procedure for ultrasound of the female pelvis to be performed trans-vaginally. (That is with a transducer placed within the vagina). This provides a much better image of the pelvic organs to aid diagnosis. You may choose to just have an ordinary scan instead, but in doing so you should realize that it will be more difficult to see clearly and therefore the result will be less clear, or even impossible to obtain. The procedure should not produce significant pain or discomfort unless the area is already very tender. The transducer or probe is the diameter of a human finger and this is similar to having a doctor perform an "internal" examination.

When having a transvaginal scan there may be a chaperone present¹. If a chaperone is not present, and you would like one, you can ask for one to be provided, or you can be accompanied by a friend or relative if you wish.

The probes are covered with a condom and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use in order to remove any risk of infection. If you have a latex allergy you should inform the person doing the scan so that a latex –free probe cover can be used instead.

From our point of view, having a transvaginal scan during your period is not a problem.

Are there any harmful side effects?

Not as far as anyone knows, ultrasound is thought to present no real risk. Unlike X ray and CT scanning it does not involve the use of ionising radiation and there have been no recorded harmful effects at the power levels used for medical diagnosis. At higher power levels some slight local heating of tissues can occur, but within our practice this should not exceed 1 or 2 degrees centigrade, and is usually very much less.

How do I get my results?

Normally the results will be sent to the doctor who sent you for the scan. There is often a need for us to review the images and perhaps consult with a senior colleague before a final report is made. If you wish to know the result, please feel free to ask the person doing the scan, but sometimes the result cannot be given to you immediately. If this is the case you will be told how and when the results should become available.

Records of the scan.

The images recorded during your scan, and the report and request details, are kept as part of our records. These are stored electronically in a database to which access is carefully controlled. Images may be used for teaching doctors and allied professional groups within the hospital, but identifiable images will not be published more widely without seeking your permission.

Who should I contact if I need more Information?

If you have any further queries about your scan appointment please contact the ultrasound appointments clerk at Derriford (this applies for Cumberland Centre scans also). The number is **(01752) 439287**

Please also call this number if you have any special needs that we can help with when you attend for your scan.

Further information on the Internet

- A list of Frequently Asked Questions relating to ultrasound is available at...
<http://www.plymouthhospitals.nhs.uk/ourservices/clinicaldepartments/Documents/Frequently%20Asked%20Questions.pdf>
- Alternatively there is an excellent description of having a scan in a “virtual hospital” prepared by the Royal College of Radiologists
<http://www.goingfora.com/radiology/ultrasound.html>

**For a large text version of this leaflet please
telephone (01752) 439287**

How useful did you find this information?

We would like you feedback on this information leaflet. Please send your comments to ...
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