

Pregnancy & Pelvic Ultrasound

Ultrasound is a widely used technique which produces detailed images of the body.

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves (much higher than human ears can hear) which are produced by the ultrasound probe (transducer). The reflected sound waves are detected by the probe and used to create an image which is displayed on the screen of the ultrasound machine.

Ultrasound can be used to gain information about a variety of conditions, including pregnancy, and gallstones.

Preparation

Some scans may require no preparation. Other scans of the female pelvis, including those in the first 17 to 22 weeks of pregnancy, require a full bladder and you will be asked to drink 1 litre of fluid 1 hour before your examination. It is important you have a full bladder, however if you feel you are 'bursting' before your appointment please try to only partly empty your bladder.

Specific instructions will be provided when you make an appointment.

Procedure

Your examination (scan) will be performed by a sonographer, who is a specially trained technologist.

The sonographer will ask you to lie on a couch next to the ultrasound machine. A clear gel is applied to the area to be examined. The ultrasound probe is then placed in contact with the skin and moved over the surface to study the tissues below. When the still pictures are taken you may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds. The scan is completely painless, although pressure may be applied to improve the view in some areas. Please tell the sonographer should this become uncomfortable.

In some female pelvic scans, we may suggest using a transvaginal probe to get a closer view of the pelvic organs.

A transvaginal scan is frequently performed early in pregnancy (12 weeks or less). There may also be some indications for this procedure later in the pregnancy.

The transvaginal scan is performed with an empty bladder, and as a result many patients find it more comfortable. The probe is about the same diameter as a thumb, and is lubricated with gel before insertion into the vagina. A protective cover (a condom) is placed over the transducer each time it is used, so there is no risk of infection.

If you have an objection to a transvaginal ultrasound being performed please inform the sonographer.

How long will my examination take?

Most ultrasound scans take 20-60 minutes to complete. The radiologist may come to view the screen, but this is quite routine and should not cause alarm. The images are then interpreted by the radiologist who writes a report for your referring doctor.

Please contact your referring doctor to discuss the results.

Why should I have a pregnancy ultrasound?

In obstetrics, many doctors recommend a scan at 18-20 weeks as part of routine antenatal care. An ultrasound will provide valuable information about your pregnancy such as the following:

- Help determine the due date of your baby.
- Check the number of babies.
- Determine if the pregnancy is continuing normally if there has been any bleeding early in the pregnancy.
- Check the position of the placenta if there has been any bleeding late in the pregnancy.
- Check the anatomy of the baby and as far as possible check for abnormalities.
- Assess the growth of the baby and its well-being.

Not all birth defects are reliably diagnosed with ultrasound and a normal scan is not an absolute guarantee of a normal baby.

PLEASE BRING ANY PREVIOUS X-RAYS OR SCANS WITH YOU ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION.

CONFIRM ANY PREPARATION REQUIRED WITH STAFF WHEN MAKING YOUR APPOINTMENT.

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Your doctor may request to go filmless

With the growing use of digital imaging, Ultrascan Radiology is giving doctors the opportunity to not receive hard copy films and to replace them with electronic reports and images – in other words, go “filmless”.

If your referring doctor elects to go “filmless,” once you have completed your medical imaging examination, you will no longer have to wait for x-ray films. The images will be sent electronically to your doctor’s computer together with a report from our Radiologist.

If you require films in the future, all films are stored digitally and can be requested at anytime with 24 hour notice.

PREGNANCY & PELVIC ULTRASOUND IS PERFORMED AT OUR AUBURN, CAMPBELLTOWN (QUEEN ST & PARK CENTRAL), CASTLE HILL, LIVERPOOL & WESTMEAD CLINICS

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