

Patient Information Leaflet

Having A Pelvic Ultrasound Scan

Produced By: Diagnostic Imaging

Date: October 2013
Review due: October 2016



The following information may be of use to you before you attend for your appointment. Please take a few minutes to read through it. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to ask the staff who are performing the test—they are always glad to be of help.

What is an ultrasound examination?

An ultrasound examination obtains a picture of the inside of the body without the use of x-rays. It is a very safe technique using high frequency sound waves which are transmitted through a part of the body and reflected by the internal organs and structures. These 'echoes' form a picture on a television screen, which can be analysed to give information about the organs seen.

Pelvic ultrasound scan.

It is our policy in the Diagnostic Imaging Department at St Mary's Hospital to use the abdominal approach to pelvic scanning in the first instance, **so you will need to have a full bladder when you attend for your appointment.**

As a guide, we recommend that you drink at least 2 pints of water about an hour before the appointment and then refrain from emptying your bladder in order for the bladder to be sufficiently full for the examination. If your bladder is not full enough at the time of the scan you may be asked to wait for a short while to allow it to fill more.

During the test:

The examination is usually slightly darkened and the scanning machine and screen on which the images appear, will be beside the bed. Usually, only one person performs the test but a second member of staff will be present throughout the examination. The machine makes a slight humming noise. You will be asked to lay on the ultrasound couch and uncover the lower abdomen to allow access for the scan probe. Warmed gel will be put onto your skin to improve contact for the probe and make it easier to slide across the area. By moving the probe in various directions, all the pelvic structures are displayed on the screen. While the probe is moved, you may experience some minor discomfort but it should not be a painful procedure. It usually takes between 2 minutes and 10 minutes to complete the examination.

Sometimes, a transvaginal scan may also be required in order to obtain clearer information about the pelvic organs. This will require your verbal consent before the scan is done. You will not be asked to have this test if you have never had a vaginal (internal) examination.

What is a transvaginal scan?

During a vaginal scan a small probe is placed inside the vagina so it is close to the pelvic organs. This makes it possible to get a clearer view and much greater detail. You will be asked to empty your bladder and remove your underwear and may be given a gown to wear. The vaginal probe is cleaned before use, covered with a protective sheath, and lubricated with jelly to make its insertion into the vagina easy and friction free. The probe is inserted very gently into the vagina and will feel very similar to having an internal examination. During the examination a hand may be placed on the lower abdomen to push the pelvic structures nearer the probe so they can be seen more easily on screen.

This examination can be performed at any time of a woman's life – in pregnancy, during menstruation or after the menopause. If you have any anxiety about the procedure, please discuss this with the staff performing the examination

Are there any risks involved?

No, there are no known risks and it is considered to be very safe.

Please inform the staff prior to the procedure if you have a latex allergy.

What happens after?

If you are having the ultrasound as an outpatient you will be able to return home immediately, providing that no other tests are required. You may eat, drink and resume normal activities (including sexual intercourse) as soon as you wish. Sometimes, the person performing the examination will be able to tell you the results, but in most cases a report will be sent to the doctor who recommended you to have the test. This is usually done within 10 working days. .

At your next GP/outpatient appointment, you will be able to discuss the results and any subsequent treatment which may be necessary

Access to Health Records by Diagnostic Staff

As a patient undergoing tests as part of a diagnostic procedure information about you may be accessed by other healthcare professionals. It is normal practice in these circumstances for your consent to be implied as part of your agreement to have the test or tests performed.

Accidental over exposure of radiation

Despite all safeguards, medical exposures can occur where the actual dose is greater than was intended. The regulations governing these exposures are either IR(ME)R 2000 or IRR 99. In the event of an over exposure the incident will be reported to the Radiation Protection Advisor. It will be down to the discretion of the RPA as to whether there is a clinical requirement to inform any patient of an overexposure.

If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Quality Team, telephone 01983 534850, who will advise you.

Valuables should not be brought into the hospital. If patients have to bring in valuable items they should ask a nurse to store them safely and request a receipt for the items. You may not be able to have the valuable items returned if the time of discharge from hospital is out of hours.

We are sorry but the Trust cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to items not given for safe keeping.

You can get further information on all sorts of health issues through NHS interactive available through Sky TV or online at: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

For Health advice and out of hours GP service please call the NHS 111 service on: 111

We Value Your Views On Our Service

If you wish to comment on the care which you, your relative or friend has received, we will be pleased to hear from you. Please speak to the person in charge of the ward, clinic or service in the first instance or ask them to contact the Quality Team. If you wish to contact them directly, telephone on 534850.

Alternatively you may prefer to write to:

Chief Executive
Isle Of Wight NHS Trust
St Mary's Hospital
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5TG

All NHS sites are no smoking areas.

If you would like help and advice to stop smoking please call: Freephone 0800 169 0 169 to talk to the NHS Smoking Helpline.

Ref: DI/PU/6