

## Patient information

# Information about your gynaecological and abdominal ultrasound examination

If, for any reason, you cannot keep this appointment, please telephone 01284 713259. This will avoid undue delay and will help us to keep our waiting list as short as possible.

### What is an ultrasound?

Ultrasound examinations (scans) use high-pitched sound waves produced by specialist equipment. The actual examination is quite painless and harmless.

To perform the ultrasound scan we will put ultrasound gel (like cold jelly) over the area to be scanned and move a small plastic probe over the area of interest.



The scan may identify the cause of your symptoms or help rule out conditions that could cause your symptoms.

Ultrasound scans are performed by sonographers and radiologists. Both male and female staff perform these scans and act as chaperones. Please let us know before your appointment if you have a specific preference for a male or female staff members. Your appointment may have to be rescheduled to arrange this.

You should feel no after-effects from the examination and will be able to return to work or home straight away.

## How do I prepare for the examination?

It is very important that your **bladder is full** at the time of your scan.

- Eat and drink **nothing** except water from midnight or for at least **6 hours prior** to your examination. This will help us to examine you more easily.

**If you are diabetic, please call 01284 713378 for additional advice.**

- To attend your appointment with a **full bladder**, please drink at least 1-2 pints (500ml / 1 litre) of water **1 hour** before your appointment time.
- Do not empty your bladder for 1 hour prior to your appointment.
- If your bladder is not full enough, you may be asked to wait and fill your bladder further, or your appointment may need to be rescheduled.

## During your ultrasound scan

The light will be dimmed in the room so the sonographers can see the screen clearly. You will be asked to lie down on the couch and lower your clothes to expose your abdomen (stomach).

You will be given a paper towel to be tucked into the top part of your underwear (to protect your clothes from the gel).

The gel is applied to your skin: this may feel cool. The sonographer or radiologist will move the probe across your skin. You may feel slight pressure or discomfort for a short period.

The scan takes approximately 20 minutes. During this time the sonographer will take images and measurements.

At the end of the scan, you will be given a paper towel to wipe off the gel.

## Transvaginal (internal) ultrasound scan

You may also be asked to have a transvaginal (internal) ultrasound scan to provide more information.

Transvaginal ultrasound scans provide more detailed images, so we are more likely to find a reason for your symptoms. Transvaginal ultrasound scans can be performed during pregnancy or menstruation.

If you have never been sexually active, you may tell the sonographer this in confidence. A transvaginal ultrasound will still be offered to you.

Before the scan the sonographer will explain the procedure and you will then be asked for verbal consent.

It is hospital policy to offer you a chaperone (another member of staff) to support both the patient and staff member and ensure safeguarding requirements are fulfilled.

You will be asked to go to the toilet to empty your bladder (if you have a tampon or menstrual cup this should be removed).

Once back in the ultrasound room you will be asked to remove the clothing on the lower half of your body, including underwear, and position yourself on the couch. The sonographer will step behind the curtain until you are ready. A sheet will be provided to place across your lap.

Once you are ready an ultrasound probe (a similar size to a tampon) will be inserted into your vagina. The probe will be cleaned and covered with a plastic cover to reduce the risk of infection. Sterile gel will also be put onto the probe to aid insertion which may feel cool. The sonographer will stop at any point if you are uncomfortable or would not like to proceed with the examination.

The sonographer will then move the probe slowly to obtain images and take measurements.

After the sonographer has obtained any images and measurements, they need to report your scan, the probe will be removed, and you may get dressed.

## **After your ultrasound scan**

At the end of the scan, you will be given paper towels to wipe off the gel. You will be able to return to work/home after the scan.

Ultrasound scans do not use radiation and are a safe procedure which can help with diagnosis.

There is a very low risk of infection from the use of ultrasound gel. This can be reduced by wiping the gel off thoroughly at the end of the scan and washing it off as soon as practical.

## **When will I get my results?**

Following the scan, the sonographer will write a report, and this will be sent back to the clinician who referred you for the scan in approximately 7-10 days.

## **Attending the appointment**

It is not advisable to bring children when attending this appointment as there are no childminding facilities available.

Children accompanying patients for imaging appointments must be able to remain unattended, as legally staff cannot look after them.

## Further information

- This NHS Trust is a teaching Trust and as part of their training it is necessary for students to observe examinations or complete the examination under the direct supervision of a sonographer or radiologist. If you do not wish for an observer to be present, please tell the receptionist on arrival.
- If you require the use of a hoist to transfer onto the examination couch, please contact the department in advance.

## Feedback

Please tell us about your experience following your appointment. You can email [PALS@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@wsh.nhs.uk) or you can complete our survey using the weblink <https://bit.ly/3U3803t> or the QR code below:



## Data protection information

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust will manage your information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The information you provide will be retained for the purposes of your healthcare. The information will be retained in line with the **NHS Records Management Code of Practice for Health & Social Care**.

You have rights in relation to the way we process your information. If you no longer want us to use your information for the purposes specified above; if you want to request to have your information erased or rectified, please contact the information governance team on 01284 713454 or email [info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk)

We will review all requests in relation to your rights under GDPR, along with our responsibilities for record keeping.

Images may be used for research purposes as well as teaching. Patients must inform a member of staff if they do not consent to this.

As part of a shared service agreement with other NHS organisations, your radiology images and records may be shared with these other organisations as part of determining and providing your care. If you would like to know more about the extent of

this sharing, or you wish us not to share at all with another organisation, or have any other concerns about it, please contact a member of staff.

Further information can be found at: [Protecting your information \(GDPR\) \(wsh.nhs.uk\)](https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/protecting-your-information)

**If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk>**



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