

Having an ultrasound scan

Radiology Department



Patient information leaflet

(Including thyroid and testicular ultrasound, lumps and bumps, studies of joints, muscles and blood vessels).

This leaflet tells you about having an ultrasound scan. It explains what is involved and how to prepare for your ultrasound scan.

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan uses high frequency sound waves to create a picture of the inside of the body. The sound waves are transmitted through the body from an ultrasound probe and pictures produced and displayed on a monitor.

What are the benefits?

It is a simple and painless way of assessing the organs inside your body in order to help investigate the cause of the symptoms you may be having.

Are there any risks?

Ultrasound is one of the safest ways of examining the body. It does not use x-rays and numerous scientific studies have provided reassuring evidence that ultrasound imaging is not harmful. (The British Medical Ultrasound Society, 2012).

Do I need to prepare for my scan?

There are no dietary requirements needed for this scan.

You should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing for your scan. You will need to remove clothing and jewellery in the area to be examined.

You should continue to take tablets and /or medication prescribed by your doctor.

If you require a hoist or your weight exceeds 23 stones (150 kilograms) please contact the radiology appointments office when you receive this appointment.

Can you bring a relative/friend?

Yes, however, it may not be suitable for a friend to remain in the scanning room whilst you are undergoing the examination. If you have learning difficulties, please bring a friend or relative with you.

Who will do my scan?

The examination will be performed by a specialist doctor (Radiologist) trained in ultrasound or a Healthcare professional who has undergone specialist ultrasound training (Sonographer). We sometimes have trainees in the department who are observing or learning under supervision. This will be indicated to you at the time of scanning. If you feel that you would rather be scanned by the regular staff alone this option will be made available to you and will not affect the way your scan is undertaken.

What happens during the scan?

Our ultrasound rooms are dimly lit to reduce the amount of 'glare' on our ultrasound monitors.

You may be asked to either sit on the examination couch or lie either on your back or stomach depending on the area of to be scanned. Ultrasound gel will be put on your skin over the area to be scanned. This allows the probe to slide easily and helps to produce clearer pictures. The Sonographer or Radiologist will slowly move the probe over your skin while viewing the images on the screen. Records of selected images will be made which can be viewed later.

You may be asked to hold your breath at times or to change position. You may be asked to move the limb being examined or the Radiologist/Sonographer may move it for you to evaluate the anatomy.

Occasionally, there may be a need to press quite firmly in the region where you may be having pain. This will be brief but is necessary in helping arrive at a diagnosis.

After the scan the gel can be wiped off and you will be able to get dressed.

How long will it take?

The scan usually takes between 10 -15 minutes. Whilst we will endeavour to ensure you are seen at your appointed time, sometimes emergencies may have to take priority. Please be patient, but feel free to ask the reception staff if you think that you may have been overlooked.

The total time in the department is likely to be 30-40 minutes.

What happens after the scan?

If you have no further tests scheduled for the same day, you should be able to resume your normal activities immediately.

When will I get my results?

Your images will be reviewed after the scan and may need to be discussed with a senior colleague or consultant. The scan report will then be sent to your referring doctor, which is normally within 14 days. If your clinic appointment is within this time please inform the Radiologist or Sonographer who performed your scan.

Where will I have my scan done?

Your ultrasound scan may be undertaken at The Royal Surrey County Hospital, Haslemere Hospital or Cranleigh Village Hospital. The hospital you are being scanned at and the time of your scan will be written on the accompanying appointment letter.

Privacy and dignity

Sometimes tests, although necessary, can be embarrassing or undignified for patients but we promise to do everything we can to make you as comfortable as possible during your visit to the department.

We hope that the information in this leaflet will answer any questions you may have but please feel free to contact us if you have any particular worries, questions or concerns. We have both male and female staff in our department.

Are there alternative scans I could have instead?

Your doctor has requested for you to have an ultrasound scan as they believe that this is the most suitable scan. It may be that you have other scans or investigations booked as well. If you have any concerns over the type of scan you should be having please call us or speak to your referring doctor for more information.

Questions and contact details

Following the examination, if you experience any problems please contact the Radiology appointments office between 09:00 and 16:00. Outside these times please contact your GP.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this procedure, please contact us before your appointment on **01483 464150** (a direct line).

If you cannot or do not wish to undergo the examination, please advise us as soon as possible on **01483 464150**. Wasted appointments cost the NHS money.

Royal Surrey County Hospital – **01483 464150**

Cranleigh Village Hospital – **01483 464150**

Haslemere Hospital – **01483 782311**

Please be aware that if you are more than 10 minutes late for your appointment we may not be able to scan you and you may have to be rebooked.

Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure.

Reference source

British Medical Ultrasound Society (2012) Statement for the General Public on the Safety of Medical Ultrasound Imaging

- www.bmus.org/static/uploads/resources/Statement_for_the_General_Public_on_the_Safety_of_Medical_Ultrasound_Imaging.pdf

Website for further information

For general information about radiology departments visit NHS choices

- www.nhs.uk/conditions/ultrasound-scan/

Contact details

For further information about Diagnostic Imaging Services at Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, please contact:

Royal Surrey County Hospital

Egerton Road
Guildford
Surrey
GU2 7XX

www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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