

Ultrasound



Ultrasound & your Baby

THE
Radiology
GROUP 

Why have ultrasound in pregnancy?

The most common reasons to have an ultrasound in pregnancy is to determine the age (gestation) of the baby, to confirm its wellbeing and to make sure the baby is growing normally. In early pregnancy we determine the age of your baby by measuring the length of the embryo. Later, after 16 weeks gestation, the age is confirmed from calculations using the head, abdomen and upper leg measurements.

What are the risks?

Diagnostic ultrasound has been used for over 25 years in pregnancy. Current knowledge indicates that the benefits of the prudent use of diagnostic ultrasound for pregnant women far out-weigh possible risks.

Will it hurt?

There is no pain involved in an ultrasound scan of your abdomen although for some early pregnancies there may be some discomfort from maintaining a full bladder.

What will I see?

The baby's heartbeat, body and limb movements can usually be seen. It is interesting to note that the baby can be seen moving during an ultrasound examination earlier in the pregnancy than you can feel it.

During the scan

Family members are most welcome to join you during the ultrasound scan but please bear in mind that the ultrasound room will only accommodate a small number of people.



Appointments

Please phone us to make an appointment for your scan and we can explain any preparation that may be required.

Pre examination

- If you are over 12 weeks gestation and have had a previous scan in this pregnancy you do not need any preparation
- If you have not had a previous scan in this pregnancy and are under 12 weeks gestation you will need a full bladder: One hour before your scan please empty your bladder and then immediately drink 1 litre (4 glasses) of water
- If you are under 12 weeks gestation and you have had a previous scan in this pregnancy it is not necessary for you to have a full bladder when you come for your appointment

The examination

During your pregnancy more than one scan may be requested by your doctor or midwife. This may be to visualize an area not seen adequately on a previous scan, to check the baby's growth or to see where the placenta is located before delivery of the baby. The scan will take approximately 10 - 30 minutes and is performed by a sonographer (a technician trained in ultrasound).

Factors that determine the length of the scan are:

- the gestation (age of the fetus)
- how much fluid is present around the baby
- the reason the scan is required
- the position of the baby in the uterus
- how full the bladder is
- whether a trans-vaginal scan is required

What does a trans-vaginal scan involve?

This scan involves a probe similar in size and shape to a tampon that is inserted into your vagina and connected to an ultrasound machine and monitor. The position of the probe closer to the uterus gives us a better view of the fetus.

Post examination

When your ultrasound is completed the radiologist will interpret the images and send a report to your doctor or midwife. A copy of your scan images are available for you.

Your appointment

date:

time:

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