



Ultrasound

...and your baby

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What is Ultrasound in pregnancy?



The most common reasons to have an ultrasound in pregnancy is to determine the age 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 30 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 as well as 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.

Appointments

Please contact us to make an appointment for your scan and we can explain any preparation that may be required. You can always request a chaperone at the time of making your appointment.

During the scan

Family members are most welcome, however in order that we may give our full attention to your medical needs, only two family members or friends can be present with you. If you bring more, they will need to wait in our reception area. However, please note that young children must be accompanied by a supporting adult at all times.

The examination

Please contact us to make an appointment for your scan and we can explain any preparation that may be required. During your pregnancy more than one scan may be requested by your doctor or midwife. This may be to look at 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 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
- whether a trans-vaginal scan is required

What does a trans-vaginal scan involve?

This procedure involves a sonographer inserting an ultrasound probe about 5cm into your vaginal canal. The position of the probe closer to the uterus gives us a better view of the pelvic organs and 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.





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