Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Transvaginal Ultrasound Scans

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Transvaginal Ultrasound Scans

Patient Information

Radiology

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Introduction

If this information does not answer your questions, please contact the X-ray Department where your call can be directed to a Sonographer or Radiographer who will be pleased to help you:

Department of Radiology at:

Royal Albert Edward Infirmary

Wigan Lane

Wigan

WN1 2NN

Telephone **0300 707 2397**

Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm

Leigh Infirmary

The Avenue

Leigh

WN7 1 HS

Telephone **0300 707 8729**

Thomas Linacre Centre

Parsons Walk

Wigan

WN1 1RU

Telephone **0300 707 8560**

Wrightington Hospital

Hall Lane

Appley Bridge

Wrightington

WN6 9EP

Telephone **0300 707 8560**

What is a transvaginal ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan 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.

It is used to help diagnose disease. These scans are performed in X-ray by a Sonographer (male or female) who is a highly skilled health care professional who performs all types of ultrasound imaging or by a Radiologist (specialist x-ray doctor).

Some of these tests may also be performed by a Gynaecologist who is a doctor specialising in women's health.

How does it work?

An ultrasound scan is a way of producing detailed pictures of the body using sound waves. The sound waves are at a pitch that is too high to be heard by the human ear. A computer converts the information into a moving picture that is displayed on a monitor. The pelvic organs (uterus and ovaries) can be examined for any abnormalities. Both normal and problem pregnancies can also be monitored this way.

Is it safe?

Ultrasound is considered to be a harmless method of investigating the body. There are no known side-effects from diagnostic ultrasound scanning.

What are the benefits of having ultrasound?

This examination will help us make the correct diagnosis so you will be able to be given the correct treatment.

How long will the scan take?

Each examination is different – the time taken to perform the procedure varies from approximately five to ten minutes.

Why a transvaginal scan?

You may be more familiar with the transabdominal scan approach. This requires a full bladder, and a probe is pressed on the abdomen which can be a little uncomfortable. The vaginal scan does not require you to have a full bladder as the probe is close to the pelvic organs, so a good view is obtained of the uterus and ovaries, the pictures are much clearer and there is a greater detail.

What should I expect?

No special preparation is necessary.

You may be offered this test if you have never had a vaginal (internal) examination previously, however acceptance of the test is your personal choice. If you have any questions or anxiety about the procedure, please discuss this with the staff performing the examination.

The examination can be performed at any time during a woman's life - in pregnancy, during menstruation and after the menopause (change of life). The person performing the scan will tell you what to do and will help you if you have any difficulties.

You will be asked to go to the toilet to empty your bladder completely prior to the test. This is because a full bladder may prevent a clear view of other pelvic structures. You will be asked to take off your underwear and perhaps put on a hospital gown. You will be given privacy to do this.

The examination room is usually slightly darkened and the scanning machine and screen on which the images will appear will be besides the bed. The machine makes a slight humming noise. Usually only one person performs the test.

During the test

You will be made comfortable on a couch and placed in a position that allows an internal vaginal examination to be performed easily.

The vaginal probe is disinfected before use, covered with a protective sheath and lubricated with a gel to make its insertion into the vagina easy. The probe is inserted very gently into the vagina – it will feel similar to having an internal examination. By moving the probe in various directions, all the pelvic structures are displayed on the screen. Whilst the probe is moved, you may experience some minor discomfort but it is not a painful procedure. 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 the screen.

After the test

If you are having the ultrasound examination as an out-patient, 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.

What if I have other questions?

If you have any questions, doubts or worries, just ask. The ultrasound staff want to make you feel as relaxed as possible. This makes the scan easier for you and means that we get

better pictures to aid your diagnosis.

We sometimes have junior medical staff and trainees in our department. Trainees and junior staff may be present at the time of your examination. If you are uncomfortable with this arrangement, please inform the ultrasound staff at the time of your appointment. This will not affect your care or treatment in any way.

When will I get the results?

Sometime the person performing the examination will be able to tell you the results, but in all cases a full report will be sent to the doctor who requested the test.

Normally you can expect to receive the complete results of your scan when you next see the doctor who sent you for the examination.

After your examination, the Radiologist, Gynaecologist or Sonographer who performed the scan will study the pictures taken during your examination. A report is then prepared and this is sent to your doctor who asked for the examination. The report is normally sent out the day following the examination.

What to do if you need ambulance transport

If you need an ambulance / transport, you should ask your General Practitioner (GP) Surgery to arrange it. You will need to give them three working days' notice. Please note that hospital transport is provided on medical need only.

If you cannot attend your appointment, please contact the Ultrasound Department at the Hospital where you have been given an appointment so that we can offer your appointment to somebody else.

We will be glad to offer you an alternative appointment and will try our best to accommodate you at a date and time suitable to you.

Please allow plenty of time to park your car.



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