

Department of radiology

Ultrasound - a guide for patients

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan is a simple, usually painless test that uses sound waves to produce images of organs and structures inside your body. The special ultrasound machine sends out and receives the waves and then produces the images. This scan does not use X-rays.

Is there any preparation for my ultrasound scan?

Very little preparation is needed for your scan. You should continue with any medication. Eat and drink as normal unless we tell you otherwise.

If you are having a scan of your pelvis then you should attend with a full bladder. You will need to drink one litre of fluid and not go to the toilet until after your scan.

When you arrive for your scan, we may ask you to wear a hospital gown. You are welcome to bring your own dressing gown to wear over this while you are waiting for your scan. Please do not leave any valuables in the changing cubicle.

What happens during my ultrasound scan?

A member of the ultrasound staff will escort you into the scanning room and introduce you to the radiologist (specialist doctor who is trained to interpret your scan). He or she will explain the procedure to you and answer your questions. You will be asked to lie on the scanning couch on your back and the radiologist will put some cold jelly on your skin. He or she will then run the ultrasound probe over your skin - this should not hurt.

The information from your body is displayed as a picture on the monitor. The radiologist will be looking at the ultrasound machine during your scan. The room is usually darkened during the examination. The scan takes between 20 - 40 minutes depending on which parts of the body are being examined.

What happens after my ultrasound scan?

After your scan, the radiologist will send a report to the consultant who referred you, usually within 1 week.

Is the test safe?

Diagnostic ultrasound is an extremely safe test.

What is the benefit of an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound is often the best way to look at the various organs and tissues of the body without using X-rays.



Are there any alternatives to an ultrasound scan?

There are other scans which can be done instead of an ultrasound scan but they may not be as useful in patients with your condition. These include CT (computerised tomography scans using X-rays) and MRI (scans using a powerful magnet).

What happens if I decide not to have an ultrasound scan?

If you decide not to have an ultrasound scan then an alternative scan such as CT or MRI scan may be needed. The decision to use an alternative scan is usually made by the doctors looking after you together with the radiologists.

What happens if I can't keep my ultrasound appointment?

If you can't keep your appointment, please contact the ultrasound department straight away to arrange an alternative date.

If you are admitted to hospital before your appointment, please tell the ward staff that you have an ultrasound appointment booked.

If you have any questions, please phone the radiology department on **0161 446 3322**.

Your ultrasound will be carried out in either of the two departments listed below:

[] Radiology 2 (department 34)

[] The integrated procedures unit (IPU) (department 2)

If you have any questions, please phone the radiology department on **0161 446 3322**.

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **patient.information@christie.nhs.uk**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

