



What is a Pelvic (Transvaginal) Ultrasound Scan?

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This is an examination of the lower abdomen and pelvis using high frequency sound waves and is used to make detailed images of the body which are then read by the sonographer or doctor performing the examination.

What do I need to do before the test?

- Please carefully check your appointment date and time. The ultrasound service mainly offers appointments on weekdays but you may receive an appointment for an evening or weekend
- If you cannot keep your appointment or have any questions, please contact us on any of the following numbers, 0121 371 2362 / 0121 371 2254 / 0121 371 2364
- Follow the **preparation instructions** below

Preparation:

- You need to have a full bladder at the time of your examination. Please drink 2 pints of water or squash approximately 1 hour prior to your appointment time. **Do not** empty your bladder until after the scan
- If you are worried about travelling with a full bladder, please attend 30 minutes before your appointment time and ask the receptionist for a drink to fill your bladder
- Please contact us on 0121 371 2362 / 0121 371 2254 / 0121 371 2364 for further advice if you:
 - **have a catheter**
 - **have any other questions**

Where do I go for the scan?

Please go to the Main Entrance of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Birmingham, Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, B15 2GW. Please then follow signs to the Outpatient Imaging Department which is located on Level 0.

Allow yourself enough time to get from the car park, which is a 5–10 minute walk.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but our waiting area is small, so please limit the number of people accompanying you. If you bring children less than 16 years old you will also need to bring someone who can supervise them while you are having your scan, otherwise the scan will be postponed.

What should I wear?

The examination will normally be done with you wearing your own clothes. A gel-like substance will be applied to the area being scanned; therefore you may wish to wear separates, a top and bottom or something loose. Paper will be used to protect your clothes from the gel but this cannot always be completely avoided. The gel should not harm your clothes. Alternatively, ask one of our assistants for a gown and you can use the changing facilities provided.

What happens when I arrive?

You will be greeted by reception staff at the front desk of the Imaging Outpatient Department and then directed to the ultrasound waiting area.

Please allow up to 45 minutes in the hospital for your scan but occasionally this could be longer. The examination time for the scan varies but most will last about 20 minutes. We do our best to run on time but your scan may be delayed for emergencies.

What happens during the scan?

The examination is usually performed in two parts. The first part is a transabdominal scan (a scan with the probe on your abdomen). You will be asked to lie down on a couch whilst the doctor or sonographer (a specialist in Ultrasound Scanning), performs the scan. Some gel will be placed on the part of your body that needs examining. A small, harmless probe is then placed on your skin and takes the images. This is usually painless unless the area being examined is tender.

It is often preferable to perform a transvaginal scan in order to get clearer images and to make a better diagnosis. For this you will be asked to empty your bladder and return to the examination room. You will be asked to remove your pants and trousers if you are wearing them – skirts and dresses will not usually need to be removed. You will be asked to lie on a foam pad to raise your pelvis and your lower abdomen will be covered with a sheet.

A small ultrasound probe covered with a disposable sheath will be placed in the vagina and images will appear on the monitor. This part of the examination should take approximately 5 minutes. It may be uncomfortable but should not be painful and most people find it less uncomfortable than a smear test.

Should I have a transvaginal scan?

The images obtained using transvaginal scans are often far superior to that of a transabdominal scan. However, this scan is not necessary every time and the decision as to whether this is needed is usually made at the time of the examination.

We would not perform this test on an individual that has never been sexually active in their lifetime. Before we perform an internal scan we will ask for your permission to do the test and we would not perform it

on someone that does not want an internal examination.

Are there any risks associated with this test?

There are no known harmful effects from ultrasound waves. We use a clean and hypoallergenic gel so there is minimal risk of a skin reaction. If you have a latex allergy, please inform us prior to the examination so that we can ensure we use latex-free products.

There is a minimal risk of cross infection. However, equipment is cleaned thoroughly between each patient and the operator will use clean gloves for every patient. A single-use disposable sheath is used to cover the probe for each patient.

What happens afterwards?

You will be able to leave straight after the scan. There is no reason you cannot drive home and resume normal activities.

The doctor or sonographer performing your scan may be able to give you some preliminary results at the time of the scan but this is not always possible.

If your GP has sent you for the scan then your results should be available from your GP in 7–10 days. However please check with the GP surgery that your results have arrived before attending that GP appointment.

If a hospital consultant has sent you for a scan then the results will be available at your next clinic appointment. If you have not heard from your hospital consultant by three weeks after your scan, please contact the consultant's secretary via the hospital Switchboard on 0121 627 2000.



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

Imaging

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