

Are there any complications or risks?

There are very few complications or risks to having the contrast enhanced ultrasound scan. The most common side effect (seen in up to 1 in 100 patients) are headache and nausea. This is why we ask you to stay in the department for 30 minutes after your examination to ensure you are feeling well enough to go home. Minor reactions at the injection site such as redness or bruising may sometimes occur due to the cannula.

What if I am taking Warfarin or other blood thinning drug?

There is no different preparation or procedure required if you are taking blood thinning medication however you may wish to tell the sonographer or doctor so they are aware when removing the cannula.

Can I drive following the examination?

Yes, however we ask you to remain in the department for 30 minutes after your examination to make sure you have no immediate side effects before you leave.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk.

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Contrast Enhanced Ultrasound Scan (CEUS) - FASTING

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Introduction

This leaflet has been produced to give you information about your contrast enhanced ultrasound scan. Most of your questions should be answered by this leaflet. It is not intended to replace the discussion between you and your doctor. If, after reading it you have any concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with one of the healthcare team who has been caring for you.

What is a Contrast Enhanced Ultrasound Scan?

It is an ultrasound scan which is enhanced by an ultrasound contrast agent and is performed to look in detail at the anatomy of your abdominal organs i.e. the liver, gallbladder or kidneys. This is to determine if there is anything abnormal and to help form a diagnosis or confirm if your anatomy is normal.

How is the scan performed?

You will be asked to lie down on an examination couch in an ultrasound room. The member of staff undertaking your scan will either be a sonographer or doctor. Before the procedure starts, the sonographer or doctor will introduce themselves. There may also be an imaging department assistant present in the room as well.

Your abdomen will need to be exposed. We advise you wear a top and either trousers or a skirt so that all of your clothing does not need to be removed. A gel will be applied to your skin and an ultrasound probe will be moved over the abdomen. Gentle pressure is required to obtain the best image. You may be asked to turn on you side to aid the image quality further. The images are displayed on monitor which the sonographer or doctor will look at during and after the examination.

As part of the test you will be given a small injection of an ultrasound contrast agent. The contrast agent used in ultrasound is called Sonovue. Sonovue is a saline solution; it is non-allergenic and is not iodine based. It is unlikely you will suffer any side effects from the injection and it will have left your body, via your normal breathing, by the time the examination is completed. Between 2–5ml of the contrast agent will be injected and will be given through a small cannula in your inner elbow or the back of your hand. The cannula will be removed 30 minutes after the injection. The contrast enhances the images displayed and gives extra information to help with your diagnosis.

Once the examination is completed you will be given some paper towel to wipe away the gel.

Why do I need a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan?

The doctor or healthcare team looking after you have referred you for a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan so that a diagnosis can be given. The scan can detect or confirm abnormal findings but is more often used to reassure you and your doctor that there are no abnormalities present.

You may have had a recent CT, MRI or ultrasound examination. Sometimes this can highlight areas that require further investigation. This is quite common and patients are often referred for a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan to help identify if there are any abnormalities in the body, such as tumours, polyps or abscesses.

How do I prepare for a contrast enhanced ultrasound scan?

For your scan we are specifically imaging your gallbladder so we will need you to fast (eat no food) for 6 hours prior to your scan. Only clear fluids are allowed in this time. This ensures the gallbladder can be seen more clearly during the scan. You will be able to eat normally after the scan is completed