



Pelvic Ultrasound

Please come with a full bladder to make it easier to obtain images.

What is a Pelvic Ultrasound?

This involves ultrasound assessment of the uterus, ovaries and the parts of the pelvis which are nearby. A filled bladder is optimal for this type of scanning which you will be informed about at the time of booking. Your doctor will usually request a pelvic scan if they are concerned about your current health or are showing signs of certain health conditions such as abnormal bleeding or fibroids.

Ultrasound uses high frequency pulsed sound waves to produce images of the organs in the pelvis. Scanning will be performed both via the tummy and with your consent, via a vaginal approach.

What happens on the day?

The timing of the scan is not critical but if the problem you are experiencing is heavy bleeding, then having the scan just after your period has finished is optimal.

The sonographer will take you through to the scanning room. You will be asked to lie on the table and expose your lower abdomen. A towel will be tucked into your pants to limit spread of the gel onto your clothes.

Clear gel is applied to your abdomen and the sonographer moves the probe over your abdomen recording images. The sonographer may place their hands on your abdomen to gently move the pelvic organs into better imaging positions.

After we have scanned across your abdomen, a vaginal scan is then performed (with your consent). A vaginal scan is generally required to enhance the detail of the uterus and the ovaries and to assess sites of pelvic pain. It gives us a much better picture of your uterus and ovaries.

After emptying your bladder and wearing a gown you will lie on the bed and a special probe is positioned in your vagina. This has a sterile disposable cover. During this examination the vaginal probe is moved with varying pressure at different angles to obtain images of the uterus and ovaries.

Risks

Both methods of scanning whether across the abdomen or through the vagina require some probe pressure and may be uncomfortable. It is rarely painful. Occasionally there will be bleeding after a vaginal scan which should stop in 24 hours. If it does not stop, please see your local doctor.

Pelvic scanning has some limitations and so we may not be able to see everything we want to see. These limitations are commonly related to displacing the overlying bowel.

Benefits

A pelvic scan can give us a lot of information about your ovaries and uterus. It can help determine why you might be experiencing such things as pelvic pain and pelvic bleeding.

If there is anything of clinical concern to us that we discover from your scan, we will talk to you about it on the day. This is very reassuring for you.

How reliable is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan uses high-frequency sound waves to create images of the inside of the body. Sound waves are used instead of radiation which makes them safe.

The sound wave travels through your skin and tissue to the area of interest and then travels back again to the probe to give us an image. It can be difficult to see anatomy in women with a large BMI. In women who are post-menopausal, it can be tricky to see ovaries as they tend to shrink as we get older.

How long will it take?

A pelvic scan takes approximately 45 minutes.

How should I prepare for the scan?

We recommend that you drink 2 glasses of water half an hour before your scan time. We will scan you across your abdomen to start with and then we will direct you to the toilet to empty your bladder completely for the vaginal scan.

Things you should know:

- Please drink 2 glasses of water half an hour before your scan
- A transvaginal scan (with consent) allows us to see your uterus and ovaries much more clearly.