Having a Transvaginal (Internal) Pelvic Ultrasound Patient Information

Patient Information

You have been referred for a Transvaginal (Internal) Ultrasound Scan to help find the cause of your problems. This leaflet has been designed to explain what this involves. It may not answer all of your questions, so if you have any queries, please ask the staff who will be performing the scan – they will be happy to help and advise you. What is an Ultrasound Examination?

What is an Ultrasound Examination?

Ultrasound is an imaging technique which uses high frequency sound waves to obtain pictures of the inside of the body without the use of X-rays. It is a safe and generally painless procedure.

Why have I been booked for a Transvaginal (internal) Ultrasound Scan?

You may be familiar with the abdominal ultrasound scan, which requires a full bladder and the scan is done over your abdomen and pelvis. The transvaginal (internal) ultrasound scan does not require a full bladder as the scan probe is placed inside the vagina and is closer to the pelvic organs being examined.

This type of scan is used to help provide clearer pictures of the womb, ovaries and surrounding structures.

We use this method of scanning to help assess the cause of problems such as sub-fertility or abnormal vaginal bleeding, when we need to make a better assessment and more accurate measurement of the lining of the womb (endometrium). We also perform this type of scan if you have been experiencing a problem like pelvic pain and we need to make a better assessment of the ovaries and tubes to look for cysts or any other conditions that may be affecting these organs.
How to prepare for the Scan?

You do not need a full bladder for this scan so you will need to empty your bladder completely prior to the scan.

If you are using a tampon, this will need to be removed before the scan. You will not be asked to have a vaginal ultrasound scan if you are unable to tolerate vaginal (internal) examinations or if you are not sexually active and are a virgin. You should continue to take any medication prescribed by your doctor.

Please note that an internal scan can be performed at any time during a woman’s life – in pregnancy, during your period or after the menopause. If you have any concerns about this procedure, please discuss this with the staff that will be performing the examination.

How is the scan performed?

For a transvaginal (internal) ultrasound scan, once you have emptied your bladder, we will ask you to undress completely from the waist down and put on a hospital gown or cover your waist with a sheet we will give you. If you are wearing a skirt, you may prefer to just remove your underwear. You will be asked to lie on your back on the ultrasound couch and position yourself in a way that allows the scan to be performed easily. This will involve raising your knees and keeping the soles of your feet flat on the ultrasound couch. A specially designed ultrasound probe is used for this procedure. It will be covered with a protective sheath and lubricating gel, then gently inserted into your vagina. The ultrasound probe will need to be moved in different positions in order to visualize the uterus and ovaries clearly.

Who will scan me?

We have both male and female members of staff, who are specially trained in ultrasound techniques and perform pelvic ultrasound examinations. The member of staff scanning you will either be a doctor (radiologist) or sonographer. If you have any concerns about this, please inform us before attending for your scan.

How long will the scan take?

Your scan appointment is usually booked for 15 minutes but this may vary depending on how clear the pictures are or if we need to do other investigations. Although every attempt is made to scan patients on time, delays may occur due to unforeseen circumstance.
What happens after the scan?

Your scan pictures will be examined by the person performing your scan and a report will be sent to the doctor that referred you for this procedure.

Further information

If you want further information regarding your pelvic ultrasound scan, please feel free to telephone the hospital where your appointment has been booked.
Tel: 01895 279868 (Hillingdon) 01923 844898 (Mount Vernon) Open from 9am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (incorporating Mount Vernon Hospital)
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