

DEPARTMENT OF RADIOLOGY

Ultrasound Scan Information

The leaflet tells you about having an ultrasound scan. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your Doctor but can act as a starting point for such discussions. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask the Doctor who has referred you for the test or the department which is going to perform it.

The Radiology department

Radiologists are Doctors specially trained to interpret scan pictures and carry out more complex examinations. Sonographers are highly trained professionals who carry out and report ultrasound examinations. Certain Nurses are also trained to undertake ultrasound scans.

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan is a picture of the inside of the body using sound waves that you are unable to hear. A small hand-held sensor, which is pressed carefully against the skin surface, generates sound waves and detects any echoes reflected back off the surfaces and tissue boundaries of internal organs. The sensor can be moved over the skin to view the organ from different angles, the pictures being displayed on a screen and recorded for subsequent study. Most people think that this type of scan is only used for examining the unborn child, but its use is widespread in medical practice.

Ultrasound images complement other forms of scans and are widely used for many different parts of the body. For example, they can also be used to study blood flow and to detect any narrowing or blockage of blood vessels in the neck.

An ultrasound scan is also occasionally used for intimate examinations, for example, of the prostate gland in men or of the womb or ovaries in women. For some of these examinations, it may be necessary to place an ultrasound probe in the vagina or the rectum to look at internal structures. If you are having an intimate examination, the Radiologist/Sonographer will describe the procedure to you, and your consent will be sought.

Who will be doing the ultrasound scan?

The examination may be performed by a Radiologist, Sonographer or Nurse. Sonographers are radiographers who have further training to specialise in the technique of ultrasound scanning. They carry out a great number of these examinations and also provide a descriptive report of their findings to your Doctor.

A chaperone **may** also be present throughout the examination. If you require a chaperone of the same/opposite sex for any examinations, please let us know.

Where will the procedure take place?

The General Ultrasound Department is located in East Block Level 2; Vascular Ultrasound in West Block Level 3, and Antenatal Ultrasound in West Block Level 3. Your scan may

also be performed at Cromer District Hospital or at Dussindale GP Surgery or Swanton Morley GP Surgery. Your appointment letter will give you more information on this.

Are you required to make any special preparations?

Some preparation may be required if your pelvis, kidney or bladder are to be scanned. You may be required to ensure that your bladder is full before the examination can begin. For some examinations such as of the gall bladder and pancreas, you may be required to fast for up to six hours. If so, this will be explained in the accompanying appointment letter. If you are diabetic, please inform the radiology department in advance of your scan so that we can arrange a suitable appointment time. You should also tell us in advance if you have had a similar ultrasound scan recently.

Can you bring a relative/friend?

Yes. However, it may not be suitable for a friend to remain in the scanning room if you undergo an intimate examination. If you have learning difficulties, please bring a friend or relative with you.

What happens during the scan?

You will be taken into a room where you will be asked to lie down on a couch; the room may be dimmed so that the pictures on the screen can be seen more clearly. A gel will be applied to your skin over the area to be scanned. The gel allows the sensor to slide easily over the skin and also helps to produce clearer pictures.

You may be asked to take deep breaths and to hold your breath for a few moments. For a scan of the bladder, the bladder may occasionally not be full enough for the examination and you may be asked to drink more fluid, and wait while the bladder fills up.

The Radiologist/Sonographer will slowly move the sensor over your skin while viewing the images on the screen. Records of selected images will be made so that they can be viewed later. Upon completion, the gel will be wiped off and you will be free to get dressed.

Will it be uncomfortable?

An ultrasound scan itself does not produce discomfort and apart from the sensor on your skin you will not feel anything. Occasionally it may be necessary to apply some pressure to the skin surface. Some gynaecology & obstetric scans may be done by passing a small probe into the vagina, again this should not be painful, but it may feel a little cold or uncomfortable.

How long will it take?

The process of carrying out a scan usually takes about 10–20 minutes. Obstetric scans can take up to 30 minutes, depending on what investigations are being done.

Are there any risks?

No, there are no known risks and it is considered to be very safe.

Can you eat and drink afterwards?

Yes, if you have no further tests scheduled for the same day – please check first.

When will you get the results?

The scan will be examined after your visit and a written report on the findings sent to your referring doctor. In obstetrics, you will usually be given your results immediately.

Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the Doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure.

Access to Radiology

How to find us:	General Ultrasound: East Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 2 Radiology Antenatal and Vascular Ultrasound: West Outpatients entrance and follow the signs to Level 3. Cromer Hospital: through Minor Injuries/Radiology entrance. There is limited parking at Cromer Hospital. You can find more information at: www.nnuh.nhs.uk
Hospital transport:	To enquire about hospital transport telephone 0333 240 4100
Contact details:	Telephone: 01603 288469 Monday to Friday 9am-5pm Email: nnu-tr.ultrasound@nhs.net Website: www.nnuh.nhs.uk

Please note specialist services such as musculoskeletal and vascular ultrasound are only provided at the Norfolk & Norwich University NHS Foundation Trust (not Cromer Hospital).

Please note: this leaflet describes non-interventional ultrasound scans only; separate leaflets are provided for any interventional procedures, such as ultrasound guided biopsies.

