

## Information for patients on pelvic ultrasound scans

### What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound scans are done by sending high frequency sound waves to various structures in the body through a probe. The sound waves are reflected back from structures within the body and used to form an image on the screen.

**Pelvic scans** look at the womb(uterus), ovaries, where eggs are released from each month (ovulation). They also detect nearby structures such as the bowel and bladder. There are two ways of visualising the pelvis.

The **first** way is to do a **transabdominal** scan. For this, please drink some water about an hour before your appointment. This will fill your bladder, which is then used a window to see the womb with probe on the lower part of your tummy. Please **DO NOT** go to the toilet before your appointment.

If however, you become very full, you can empty your bladder **a little** to ease the discomfort. The bladder with some urine will still be suitable for the transabdominal scan. I will then ask you to lie down on an examination couch, the lights will be dimmed so that the images on the screen can be seen more clearly. A water-soluble jelly applied to the lower part of your tummy. The jelly allows the probe to slide over the skin easily and helps to produce clearer pictures of the uterus and ovaries. You will be asked, some questions about your health before the start of the scan.

The **second** way to do a scan is a **transvaginal** scan, or **internal** scan. For this, a special probe is inserted into the vagina, with your agreement. The transvaginal ultrasound probe, will be shown to you. It is about the width of two finger tips and will be inserted about one-and-a-half inches into your vagina. For reasons of hygiene, it will be covered, with a disposable latex-free probe cover. Once inserted, the probe is moved around and rotated until the best images can be seen. The scan normally takes ten minutes to complete. Before this type of scan, you will be asked to empty the bladder completely. This scan gives much better views of the lining of the womb and ovaries, because the sound waves have to travel less of a distance. The transvaginal scan can still be done if you are on your period.

The **internal scan is safe and will not cause a miscarriage.**

The ultrasound jelly will be wiped off your skin at the end of the scan and you will be able to get dressed.

**Is it painful?** Having an ultrasound scan is usually painless. If you have a very full bladder doing a transabdominal scan may cause some discomfort if it presses on the bladder. If it is too uncomfortable please let the doctor know immediately.

The scan **cannot be done transvaginally**, if you have never had intercourse (sex). In this case only a transabdominal scan would be performed.

**What are the risks?** Ultrasound scans have been performed, since the mid-1960's. There are no harmful effects to you or the baby if you have a scanned performed in pregnancy. They do not emit radiation unlike x-rays and CT scans.

**How long will it take?** Most scans are done, within 30 minutes

**Can I bring someone with me?** Yes you can bring a friend/partner or relative to be with you during the scan

I will issue a report by email after I have had a thorough look at the pictures. I will endeavour to get it to by the end of the working day.

**Please feel free to ask me any questions before the scan starts.**