

Patient Information Sheet

Transvaginal Examination

Your doctor has requested an ultrasound examination that, in addition to a transabdominal scan (external scan over your abdomen), may also involve an internal transvaginal scan. This safe and typically painless exam provides high quality ultrasound images to aid in diagnosis.

What is ultrasound?

An ultrasound scan utilises a specialised machine that employs high-frequency sound waves to create an image of internal body structures. A small handheld probe, known as a 'transducer,' is gently moved over the skin surface (or inside the vagina for transvaginal scans). The transducer sends sound waves into the body and receives echoes that bounce back, which are then processed by the machine to generate the image that is displayed on a monitor.

What is a transvaginal scan?

Transvaginal scans provide a more detailed view of your vagina, uterus, and ovaries than an external scan. This is because the ultrasound probe is placed inside your vagina and can get very close to these structures. The ultrasound probe is specially designed to fit comfortably within the vagina, and the sonographer may need to use both external and internal gentle pressure to check how your organs move. You may experience some discomfort but please let the sonographer know if you experience pain or wish to stop the examination at any stage. The level of discomfort is usually minimal, similar to what you would experience with an internal examination at a clinic or GP surgery.

A transvaginal scan usually takes about 10-15 minutes. The transvaginal probe is disinfected, covered with a protective cover, and lubricated with gel. You will be lying on your back with your hips and knees bent, with your lower torso and upper legs covered. You may have a cushion placed underneath your lower torso or the end of the bed is lowered. The sonographer will carefully insert the ultrasound probe into your vagina. If you prefer, you may insert the ultrasound probe in the vagina yourself, with guidance from the sonographer. Only a small part of the probe is inserted, and its long handle allows the sonographer to move the probe within your vagina for optimal viewing of your internal structures.

All our staff are fully competent in this examination and the examination may be performed by a female or male sonographer. If you have a preference for a sonographer of a particular gender, please discuss this with the reception staff and this will be arranged if possible.

If a transvaginal scan is required, the individual staff member will discuss the details with you, and you are encouraged to ask questions to assist in making you comfortable during the examination. The sonographer will do their best to maintain your modesty at all times. You will be asked for your consent prior to having the scan.

Please let the sonographer know if you have any allergies to latex or rubber before the examination.

A chaperone can be available if you wish. It may be policy of the ultrasound department you are attending, or the sonographer may wish to have a chaperone present. Chaperones act as observers during the ultrasound scan, to witness and assist maintaining a professional and patient-focused approach during intimate examinations.

If you do not wish to have this scan, your request will be honoured and an alternative method of obtaining the diagnostic images may be suggested.