



1. What is an Ultrasound?

Ultrasound scans assess internal organs and help to diagnose a variety of conditions. They are also performed to assess disease in the arteries or veins.

An Ultrasound machine is made up of a console containing a computer, a display screen and a probe (transducer). The probe is a small hand-held device that resembles a microphone.

Ultrasound pictures are produced by passing ultrasonic (high frequency) soundwaves into the area being scanned.

Ultrasound does not use x-rays.

2. Will there be any discomfort, is any anaesthetic needed?

An Ultrasound is a painless procedure. No anaesthetic is required.

If scanning is performed over an area of tenderness, you may feel pressure or minor discomfort from the probe.

3. Preparation for the procedure

There are different preparations required depending on the area of the body being scanned. The medical imaging department will give you instructions on how to prepare for your scan.

4. During the procedure

The lights in the room will 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 probe to slide easily over the skin and helps produce clearer pictures.

The probe will be moved back and forth slowly over the area of interest until the area is completely examined.

You could be asked to hold your breath or roll into different positions during the scan.

Once the scan is complete, the gel will be wiped off your skin.

The Ultrasound will take between 15 and 60 minutes. This time frame is dependent on what body part is being scanned and the type of investigation is required.

In some ultrasound studies, the probe is inserted into a natural opening in the body.

These procedures include:

- Transrectal Ultrasound where the probe is inserted into a man's rectum to view the prostate.
- Transvaginal Ultrasound where the probe is inserted into a woman's vagina to view the uterus and ovaries.

These procedures may cause minimal discomfort.

If you are having an intimate examination the staff will describe the procedure to you, and your verbal consent for this will be obtained.

A second staff member may also be in the room during these procedures.

5. What are the risks of this specific procedure?

There are no known risks from an ultrasound. It is considered to be a very safe procedure.

Notes to talk to my doctor/ health practitioner about:

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