



SER Patient Information Sheet: **Transvaginal Ultrasound**

What is Transvaginal Ultrasound?

Ultrasound is the term used for high-frequency soundwaves. Ultrasound examinations use these sound waves to produce a picture or image onto a screen showing the inside of your body. An ultrasound is carried out by a trained sonographer using a hand-held device called a transducer. The transducer transmits the high-frequency sound waves into your body. Different sound waves are reflected from different soft tissue, structures or parts in the body in different ways.

Transvaginal Ultrasound is an examination of the female pelvis and urogenital tract (kidneys and bladder). It helps to see if there is any abnormality in your uterus (or womb), cervix (the neck of the womb), endometrium (lining of the womb), fallopian tubes, ovaries, bladder and the pelvic cavity. It differs from an abdominal ultrasound as it looks at the pelvic organs from inside the vagina.

The test is requested by your doctor if you have symptoms of pelvic pain, abnormal bleeding, to check for fibroids (muscle tumours of the uterus), polyps (areas of thickening of the lining of the uterus), ovarian cysts or tumours, infertility, or assessment of early pregnancy. A health professional will be there with you, and you can communicate any concerns you have.

What are the benefits of Transvaginal Ultrasound?

The insertion of the transducer into the vagina allows a very close and clear view of the pelvic organs and very clear ultrasound images to be taken of the area. This will help to guide the discussion between you and your doctor about any further investigation or treatment that may be needed.

Ultrasound is mostly non-invasive, provides accurate imaging tests of the body, is readily available and is relatively inexpensive.

How do I prepare for a transvaginal Ultrasound?

No preparation is necessary. You will be asked to go to the toilet and empty your bladder prior to the test being performed. If you are wearing a tampon, it will need to be removed. If you are having a period this is not a problem and in some instances, it is an advantage when assessing a variety of gynaecological problems.

You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to having the test. It is a good idea to wear comfortable clothing that gives easy access to the lower part of your body.



Who does the Ultrasound scan?

The examination is performed by a sonographer, who is a health professional specially trained and accredited to perform the test. Sonographers may be male or female, and we usually endeavour to have a female sonographer perform the examination. If you are not comfortable with a male, you should let the reception staff know this prior to having the test. In cases where the patient is young, a female chaperone may be requested. A partner, a female parent, female relative, or patient chaperone can be in the room at the consent of the patient.

Often it is necessary for the radiologist to attend the examination to see the images on the screen and carry out any further scans or movements and talk to you about your symptoms. After discussing the images and results with a sonographer, the radiologist will provide a report to your doctor.

What happens during the Ultrasound exam and how long will it take?

After emptying your bladder, you will be asked to undress from the waist down and you may be asked to wear a gown. You will then be asked to lie on an examination couch. Generally, a sheet, or blanket is provided to cover you where possible. You will be asked to bend your legs and the transducer is then carefully inserted into the vagina.

The transducer is especially shaped to fit comfortably into the vagina. A protective cover is placed over the transducer and warm lubricating gel is applied to it for ease of insertion. It is gently moved around and pictures or images of the pelvis are obtained. If you do not wish to have a vaginal ultrasound you can request a trans-abdominal ultrasound be performed instead. You should inform the reception staff of this as you will need to drink 2-3 glasses of water 30 minutes prior to your test and have a full bladder.

The examination usually takes between 15-30 minutes. Sometimes you will be asked to wait and have the images checked by the radiologist. The sonographer may ask the doctor to come into the room and check what has been seen, which is common.

Are there any after effects of an Ultrasound examination?

There are no after effects of a Transvaginal Ultrasound. You will be able to resume normal activities.



What are the risks of Transvaginal Ultrasound?

There are no known risks of performing Transvaginal Ultrasound. It is a technique which uses sound waves and there is no radiation involved. If you are pregnant, there are no risks to the unborn baby. If you are pregnant and your waters have broken but you are not in labour (premature rupture of the membranes), it is not advisable to have ultrasound due to a small increase in the risk of infection to your unborn baby. If you are pregnant and known to have an abnormally low-lying placenta and are experiencing vaginal bleeding, it is not advised to have Transvaginal Ultrasound as it could make the bleeding worse.

When can I expect the results of my Ultrasound?

The time that it takes your doctor to receive a written report on the test or procedure you have had will vary, depending on:

- the urgency with which the result is needed;
- the complexity of the examination;
- whether more information is needed from your doctor before the examination can be interpreted by the specialist;
- whether you have had previous X-rays that need to be compared with this new test or procedure

SER will have x-ray results to your referring doctor within 24 hours of examination. It is important that you discuss the results with your doctor, so they can explain what the results mean for you.

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