

Pregnancy Ultrasound Scan

Information for women



Information for you about your ultrasound scan appointment

Your first midwife appointment is a really important one, as it starts your pregnancy care journey with us and makes sure that you are given your first ultrasound scan appointment. Your scan appointment may last between 20 to 40 minutes.

Getting here

Do plan your journey. Parking at some of our larger hospitals can be busy and so it is important that you give yourself plenty of time for this. Our clinics are very busy, so please be with us on time, so that the clinic can run as smoothly as possible for everyone. Sometimes if you do arrive late we may not be able to carry out your scan.

Before your scan

Please do not empty your bladder before a scan. Drinking a few glasses of water before your scan will allow the sonographer to check the lower section of your uterus and cervix. This allows them to check that your cervix is closed and the position of your placenta. In early scans this also helps view the baby.

During your scan

The sonographer (the person who is carrying out the scan) will usually carry out the scan using a probe on your abdomen. Sometimes the sonographer will need to carry out a transvaginal scan, this is when a probe is placed into your vagina. If this is the case, the sonographer will explain the procedure fully to you and will ask for your consent. A chaperone (another member of staff) will be present during this part of the examination.

Can I bring someone with me to scan appointments?

Yes, we know the scan is an important moment for you and that often women will want to have someone with them at the scan. You are welcome to bring one person with you to your scan, we try and limit to this number but, an exception can occasionally be made. Please contact the department. However, if possible, we would discourage you from bringing children. There are several reasons why it is best not to have a child with you at the scan: firstly, it is not possible for a small child to be supervised and kept safe during a scan, secondly, it is very important for the sonographer to be able to concentrate on your baby during the scan and, finally, unfortunately on occasion your scan may identify a problem and this can be difficult for you to manage while also caring for a child.

What factors can affect my ultrasound scan?

We use scans to check your baby's health and development. Some, but not all, major health problems affecting your baby's development can be diagnosed. Sometimes problems can be missed if the view is restricted. This can be for a number of reasons, such as:

- Your baby's position
- The amount of amniotic fluid surrounding the baby
- Your body weight
- Scar tissue left by an abdominal operations such as a previous Caesarean birth

Will I be given pictures of my baby?

Yes, we know scan pictures are an important keepsake for people during pregnancy. We will do our very best to take a picture of your baby at your dating and fetal anomaly scan, but this is not always achievable. This can be due to the position of your baby or any increased body weight you have.

Will I be told the sex of my baby?

We know that some parents are keen to find out whether they are having a boy or a girl as soon as they can. Finding out the sex of the baby is not the purpose of a scan.

It is not always possible to determine the sex of your baby on the scan. The position of your baby, your stage of pregnancy and any increased maternal body mass may not allow us to identify the sex of your baby. The sonographer will try their best to see the sex of your baby, if you wish them to, however they cannot prolong the examination to determine the sex of the baby. Unfortunately, we cannot do a repeat scan just to find out the sex of the baby.

Trainees

We teach health professionals from all specialities across all hospitals in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. A trainee may carry out your examination, however, they will be supervised and a qualified member of staff will check the ultrasound scan before you leave the department. If you do not wish to have a trainee involved in your care, please let the sonographer know.

We know that a pregnancy ultrasound scan is an important part of your pregnancy and your pregnancy care. We look forward to welcoming you to your scan appointment.