

What is the scan for?

This scan is done to detect any abnormalities in the baby. We will also measure the baby, look at the position of the after-birth and the amount of fluid around the baby. Not all abnormalities are detected by scan but we would expect to detect 8 out of 10 serious abnormalities. The sonographer has a check list of things to look for during the scan. If you wish to know exactly what these are please ask. If certain things cannot be seen well for example the spine or heart you may be asked to come back. There is nothing unusual about this. We are just making sure you get the best examination possible.

What happens if something is wrong?

We hope your baby will be completely healthy, but 1 in 50 of all babies are born with something wrong. This may be very minor and not affect the health of the baby. If there is a major problem the sonographer will talk to one of the senior doctors who scan. Whenever possible he or she will scan you again during the same session and talk to you about the scan and the findings. Sometimes this is not possible and you will be asked to come back, usually the next day. The person doing the scan will tell you briefly what is wrong. If there is a minor problem the sonographer will tell you what this is and give you a leaflet on "minor markers". Arrangements will be made for you to come back usually within a week to have another scan by a Consultant.

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For further information please contact
the Ultrasound Department direct on
0151 702 4072

Liverpool Women's Hospital
Crown Street
Liverpool
L8 7SS

Telephone - 0151 708 9988

Visit our Web site at www.lwh.org.uk.

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Your Mid - Pregnancy Scan

Ultrasound Scans

Everyone who attends the hospital is offered a scan at between 18 and 22 weeks. Most women will already have had an earlier (booking) scan. This leaflet explains why it is done. You do not have to have this examination. If you do not wish to have this second scan please phone the Ultrasound department and cancel your appointment.

What is Ultrasound?

Ultrasound is high frequency sound which the human ear cannot hear, and is made by a device called a transducer. To obtain an image of your baby the transducer must touch the skin surface without any air in the way so a gel is always placed on the skin before scanning.

Is It Safe?

There are no known harmful effects with the medical use of ultrasound. Over 30 years of use has shown that there is no scientific evidence for believing that low levels of ultrasound used in maternity care can produce any damage in mothers or babies. The pressure of the transducer on the lower abdomen does not cause miscarriage even when a woman is having vaginal bleeding before the ultrasound examination.

Who performs the Ultrasound Scans?

Interpreting ultrasound is a skilled job and the person doing your scan will have been

specially trained. He or she may be a radiographer with extra ultrasound qualifications (a sonographer), a midwife or a doctor who has been trained in obstetric ultrasound.

Who can be there?

Your partner or other close relative is welcome to be with you as are your own children. Some of the ultrasound rooms are quite small so it is not always possible for everyone who comes with you to come into the scan room.

What will happen during the scan?

The person doing the scan will introduce themselves. After a few brief questions you will be asked to lie on the ultrasound couch. You will be asked to expose your lower abdomen and some gel will be put on it. During the examination the room lighting is often dimmed to make it easier to do the scan. The scan may take up to 20 minutes. The person doing the scan may talk to you whilst it is being done, pointing out different parts of the baby, or they may do the scan without talking directly to you. The variations in time taken for the scan is due to the position of the baby, sometimes making the examination more difficult. When they have done the scan they will turn the screen towards you and show you the baby. Afterwards you are free to ask questions and the person doing the scan will try to answer these.

Sex of the baby

It is often possible to tell the sex of the baby at this scan. However this is not 100% reliable. If you are sure you want to know the sex of the baby then ask. The sonographer will tell you only when they are sure.

Scan pictures

When you attend for your ultrasound scans it is possible to buy ultrasound pictures of your baby. We make a small charge for each picture. If you would like to purchase a picture please inform the person doing the scan of how many you require before the examination starts. The sonographer will try to obtain the best possible images of your baby, however sometimes they may be of poor quality due to technical factors such as your body build or the baby lying in an unfavourable position.