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# Ultrasound Scans

## Imaging Department

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### Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email [pals@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@asph.nhs.uk). If you remain concerned, PALS can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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### **Are there any side effects?**

Ultrasound does not use X-rays or radiation. It is painless and safe and has not been known to cause any problems or complications.

### **What is ultrasound?**

Ultrasound is very high frequency sound, inaudible to the human ear, which can be emitted and detected using an ultrasound machine.

The following information relates to the use of ultrasound for diagnosis.

Ultrasound can also be used by Physiotherapists for the treatment of soft tissue injuries but will not be described here.

### **How does it work?**

Ultrasound is painless and harmless. It travels from a probe through the skin into the body and is reflected back when it reaches fluid, organs or bones inside. The echoes are detected by the same machine and a picture is generated which is immediately visible on a screen.

### **What is it used for?**

It is used in many situations and they cannot all be listed here

In our Radiology practice it is commonly used to diagnose problems in the abdomen and pelvis, breast, testes and ovaries, in the veins of the legs, the joints and tendons of the body, major blood vessels and to examine lumps and bumps.

## **Some specialist ultrasound techniques**

In some situations a clearer picture can be obtained when an ultrasound probe is inside the body. Specially shaped and designed probes can be placed inside the vagina (trans vaginal) or the rectum (trans rectal). If you need to have this type of scan you will be informed beforehand and the radiologist will explain carefully at the time.

Ultrasound may also be used to guide the placement of equipment used for biopsy or treatment. Full information will be provided about these special circumstances.

## **What does it involve?**

Ultrasound is carried out by a Consultant Radiologist or specialist trained Radiographer (Ultrasonographer) skilled in the technique and interpretation.

You will usually lie on a couch in a darkened room and the doctor will place a hand held probe, the size of a small camera, on the skin over the area to be examined. Warm lubricating jelly is used so that the probe can be moved easily and to allow good contact with the skin. Gentle pressure is applied and you may be asked to turn or move to help obtain optimum pictures. Often you will be able to watch the monitor where the picture is constantly updated during the scan.

A record of the scan is stored on PACS ( Picture archive communication system).

A report is sent to the doctor who referred you for the scan and you will need to make an appointment to discuss the results.

## **Is there any special preparation?**

Depending on the area to be examined there may be very important instructions to follow in order that the Radiologist or Sonographer can obtain the best information for diagnosis. To scan the bladder or pelvis you may need to have a full bladder. You may be asked not to eat for several hours before a scan of the abdomen.

Take your usual medication with a sip of water unless asked not to.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

Please read the instructions specific to your scan very carefully and if you need to you can telephone our staff for advice on 01932 723630, otherwise your scan may have to be rebooked and your time may be wasted.