

Ultrasound scan information

What is an Ultrasound Examination?

Ultrasound imaging uses sound waves to produce a black and white moving image ('real time'), enabling anatomical examination of the body, and is often used to aid diagnosis of symptoms. The purpose of our Health Screening scan is to exclude or demonstrate appearances which may suggest a condition not yet producing symptoms.

Abdominal Scan:

An abdominal ultrasound scan will ensure that there is no gross abnormality visible in any of the soft tissue organs. NB The stomach, small and large bowel cannot be examined by ultrasound scan.

This scan includes imaging of the abdominal aorta to detect the development of an aneurysm, a swelling or bulging of the wall of this main artery. Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), is a common cause of sudden death in later life, particularly in men over 65 years.

Pelvic Scan:

Women who have a uterus and/or ovaries will have a pelvic ultrasound scan.

This is carried out to ensure that there is no visible abnormality in the pelvic organs or surrounding area.

For this examination to be successful, clients **must** attend with a full bladder.

How is the examination carried out?

There is no need to undress as only the abdomen is exposed.

Ultrasound gel is applied to the skin and a special probe is moved over the surface of the abdomen. The images are displayed on an adjacent screen, and interpreted by the sonographer. Some images may be stored and reviewed later to aid the writing of the report.

Positive aspects of Ultrasound Scan

Considered safe, is painless and non invasive (requires no medical intervention to be performed).

The finding of conditions not yet causing symptoms but which may be a risk to future health, can be dealt with promptly.

Occasionally a condition may be found requiring urgent treatment or surgery.

Early find of such a condition before symptoms are present may produce a better long term outcome.

Downside of Ultrasound Scan

It is operator dependant and pathology can occasionally be missed by even the most experienced.

Quality of images is variable according to the build of the client. Excessive gas in the digestive tract impedes sound waves and corrupts the images.

A normal result can give false reassurance, as there is no predictability of future health.

It can cause unnecessary anxiety when there is an 'abnormal' finding which may be of no or very low risk to health.

Results

Observations may be made which are recorded on the report but are unlikely to affect the client's health or well being, and therefore no further action is necessary.

- With your prior consent your GP will be sent a copy of your ultrasound results.
- You will receive a summary of your ultrasound results as part of your health screening report.

Occasionally further ultrasound or other investigation such as a C.T. scan is indicated and the client is referred to their GP.

It is unusual for urgent action to be necessary but if this is the case the GP is contacted immediately and the client advised accordingly.

General

Over the years some Mary How Trust clients have had to undergo treatment or surgery for potentially life threatening conditions as a result of the ultrasound scan highlighting a problem.

Statistically these numbers may be considered to be low, but individually each case is invaluable to the client concerned.

The Trust is happy to be able to offer screening scans to all clients but with the understanding that it cannot provide a guarantee for future well-being.