

Gynaecology Diagnostic Pelvic Ultrasound Outpatient Appointment

You have been referred by your GP to our gynaecology scanning clinic. This leaflet explains what to expect in this appointment and how to prepare for it. If you have any further questions, please speak to a member of the team caring for you.

Having a gynaecology Pelvic Ultrasound Scan

We have given you this factsheet because you have an appointment for a pelvic ultrasound scan. It explains what a pelvic ultrasound scan is, how to prepare for it and what will happen during the scan. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound examination obtains a picture of the inside of the body without the use of x-rays. It is a very safe technique using high frequency sound waves (that you can't hear) which are transmitted through a part of the body and reflected by the internal organs and structures. These 'echoes' form a picture on a television screen, which can be analysed to give information about the organs seen. All images are stored in your medical records. Ultrasound is very safe and there are no known risks.

How is a gynaecology scan carried out?

Pelvic ultrasound scans can be carried out in two ways:

- **Transvaginal (TVS):** This scan involves a probe to be placed inside the vagina so that it is closer to the pelvic organs being examined. This provides clearer pictures of the uterus, ovaries and any potential abnormalities that may lie deep in the pelvis. This scan does not hurt and is considered by most women to be less uncomfortable than a cervical smear. **You do not need to have a full bladder** for this scan but will need to remove clothing from below your waist (trousers, underwear, and shoes).
- **Transabdominal (TA):** (where a small transducer is moved over your abdomen). This scan is reserved for women who cannot have a transvaginal examination as they have never had sexual intercourse or cannot for a clinical

reason.

A full bladder is required for the scan, and you will need to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid one hour prior to the examination.

No preparation for either scan is required, and the scan will take approximately 5-10 minutes. We advise all TV and TA women to attend 10 and 20 minutes respectively prior to the scheduled appointment time.

Some TA ladies overfill their bladder, and this can be an uncomfortable wait. Arriving 20 minutes earlier will help you to wait more comfortably while drinking water and allow you to discuss any issues with the sonographer / chaperone.

If you attend 10 minutes after the allocated clinic appointment time **you will not be seen**. This is due to the numbers of patients booked into the scan clinic and the allocated time allowed per patient.

Can I still attend my appointment if I am on my period?

Yes, you can, however on a very rare occasion, if the sonographer has difficulty assessing the endometrial cavity due to the presence of a blood clot, they may offer you a second appointment.

Who will do my scan?

We have **male** and **female** sonographers working in the department who are experienced in gynaecology scanning. Privacy and dignity will always be respected, and a female chaperone is always present during your appointment with a male sonographer. Female sonographers do not have a chaperone routinely. We are a teaching hospital and at times may have supervised trainees in the room during the scanning procedure.

Can I bring a friend/partner to the appointment?

A friend/partner is welcome to come to your appointment and sit with you while you are waiting. Sonographers working alone may prefer to limit the number of people in the room for safety reasons. Please let the sonographer know if you wish to have a friend/partner present during the ultrasound scan.

Can I bring my children to the appointment?

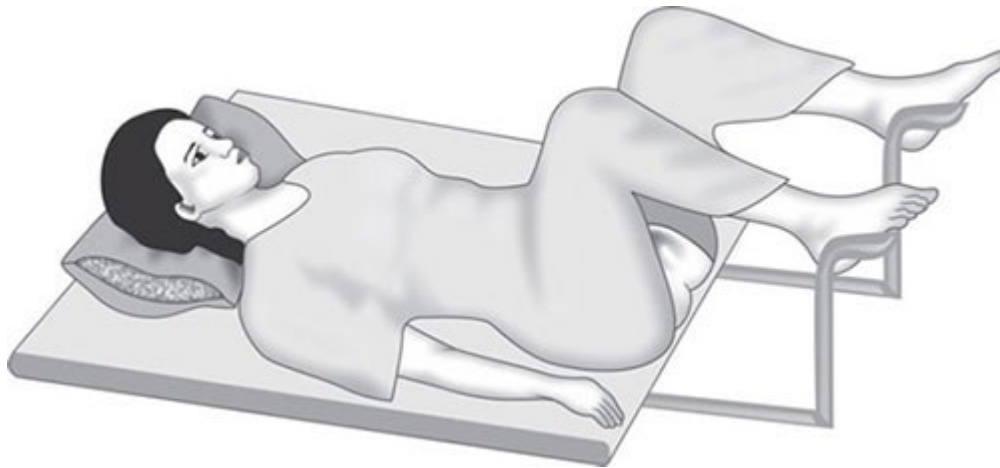
Children are not allowed in the scan rooms. If a child needs to come with you to your ultrasound, please organise for a responsible adult to supervise them in the waiting area.

During the scan

Depending on the type of scan that will be required, you will be asked to empty your bladder prior to entering the scan room. The sonographer and chaperone will

introduce themselves, confirm your details and the reason why your GP has referred you for a scan.

You will be asked to prepare for the examination by removing clothing below the waist (TV scan), be made comfortable on a couch and placed in a position that allows an internal examination to be performed easily. Your privacy will be paramount, and a sheet is provided to cover the abdominal area. The lighting in the room will be dimmed when you are ready.



The prepared vaginal probe is lubricated with aqueous jelly to allow for easy insertion of the probe. Some women describe the insertion of the probe like a vaginal examination. The sonographer will move the probe in various directions so that the pelvic structures are displayed on the screen. This is not a painful procedure but occasionally some people may feel minor discomfort. If you experience pain, please tell the chaperone or sonographer. If you find the scan too uncomfortable do let the staff know as the scan can be stopped at any point.

When the scan is completed, you will be provided with privacy to change and can leave the appointment. Findings of the report will be sent to your GP who referred you for the scan. **You will need to liaise with your GP to discuss the findings of the scan** and next steps if required. The sonography team will not discuss the findings of your report at the appointment.

Contact us

If you need to change your appointment, contact the appointment line on

- 020 8266 6506 / 020 8266 6005, Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm.

If you are running late for your appointment, please contact

- 020 8725 1702.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453

Email: pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

