

Ultrasound

What is an ultrasound?

An ultrasound is a procedure that uses high-frequency sound waves to generate images of internal body structures. Ultrasounds do not use ionising radiation, do not have any known risks, side effects or complications, and are considered very safe.

They have a wide range of applications and are commonly used for obstetric imaging; small parts imaging, including the breast, neck, and testes; abdominal and pelvic imaging; and musculoskeletal and vascular imaging. An ultrasound can also be used for guiding procedures like needle biopsies and injections, as it provides detailed, real-time information in the form of a moving image.

Do I need to prepare for my ultrasound?

Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment time with your referral and any previous scans.

If you have a child under the age of 6, they will need to be supervised by an adult other than the patient. To ensure the examination is conducted accurately, children will not always be permitted in the room during an ultrasound.

Preparation for an ultrasound will vary depending on the type of examination requested. If you have existing medical conditions such as diabetes or heart failure, or if you have any other concerns, please contact a staff member, who will be able to provide you with personalised preparation information.

If you have a gender preference when it comes to your sonographer, please let a staff member know when you are booking your scan. This can be requested for any type of ultrasound.

Information for some of the more commonly requested examinations is listed below.

Upper abdominal scans

Upper abdominal scans encompass the liver, pancreas, kidneys, gallbladder, spleen, and aorta. If you are having an upper abdominal scan, you will need to fast. Adults need to fast for at least 6 hours before their appointment, and children need to fast for 4 hours. An early morning appointment is recommended.

Pelvic and renal scans

Pelvic and renal ultrasound scans assess the kidneys, bladder, and prostate in men and the kidneys, bladder, uterus, and ovaries in women. It is recommended that you drink 1 litre of water an hour prior to your appointment. Please do not empty your bladder before the examination.

What happens during an ultrasound?

Your sonographer will collect you from reception and escort you to the ultrasound room. Depending on your scan, you may be required to change into a gown. You will be asked to either sit or lie down for your scan, and a water-based gel will be applied to the relevant area on your skin. Your sonographer will then use a transducer for the scan to record a series of images.

This process is generally pain-free; however, some pressure may need to be applied to improve the image. Your sonographer may ask for your assistance during certain scans; for example, holding your breath allows for improved views of certain structures.

After your ultrasound, your report and images will be sent electronically to your doctor. Reports and images will be also available electronically via the patient app and web portal after your examination.

How long will my ultrasound take?

Your scan time will vary depending on the complexity of the requested examination. Most simple ultrasound scans take approximately 15-20 minutes; however, more time is required for complex studies such as certain obstetric or vascular imaging.

When the scan is complete, you may need to wait while a radiologist reviews your images. Occasionally, further imaging may be required. Your sonographer will advise you if this is the case.

How much will my ultrasound cost?

All Qscan clinics offer ultrasound. The cost of your ultrasound depends on several factors, including the type of scan that has been requested. Please advise a staff member if you are a pension or health care cardholder, or if you have any other questions about the cost of your ultrasound. A customer service team member will be able to provide you with more specific information, including any out-of-pocket costs (if relevant).

If your doctor has requested more than one ultrasound, these may need to be booked on separate days due to Medicare or different preparation requirements.