

Pelvic ultrasound

What is a pelvic ultrasound?

A pelvic ultrasound assesses the uterus, ovaries, endometrium, and surrounding pelvic structures. If you are pregnant, it will provide you with images and measurements of your baby. Ultrasounds do not use radiation, as they use sound waves to generate images of internal body structures.

A pelvic ultrasound consists of two parts: a transabdominal scan and a transvaginal scan. After conducting the transabdominal scan, your sonographer will let you know if a transvaginal examination will improve the accuracy of your diagnosis.

A transvaginal ultrasound uses a specially designed transvaginal probe inside your vagina to provide a closer and more detailed view of your pelvic organs. This scan may be used to check for fibroids (muscle tumours in the uterus), polyps (thickened areas in the uterine lining), ovarian cysts or tumours, infertility, or if you are experiencing pelvic pain or abnormal bleeding. It is also useful in assessments of early pregnancy.

Do I need to prepare for my pelvic ultrasound?

We recommend you drink 1 litre of water an hour prior to your appointment. Please do not empty your bladder before the examination.

If you are using a tampon and you require a transvaginal ultrasound, you will need to remove it before the scan can commence. Transvaginal scans can be performed if you are on your period or bleeding.

If you would prefer a woman to conduct your scan, please let a customer service team member know when you are booking your appointment so this request can be accommodated.

What happens during a pelvic ultrasound?

For a transabdominal ultrasound, your sonographer will place ultrasound gel on your lower abdomen and use an ultrasound probe (also known as a transducer) to look at these structures through the lower abdominal wall. Transabdominal scans are best performed with a comfortably full bladder and take approximately 10 minutes.

Your sonographer will let you know if a transvaginal ultrasound is required. They will obtain your consent for the scan to proceed, and you will be asked to empty your bladder. You will also be provided with a gown to wear during the scan.

IF AT ANY POINT YOU WISH TO CEASE THE TRANSVAGINAL SCAN, PLEASE LET YOUR SONOGRAPHER KNOW IMMEDIATELY.

A transvaginal ultrasound is conducted using a specially designed ultrasound transducer. The diameter of this probe is not bigger than a tampon. It is sterilised before your appointment and covered by a condom or sterile probe cover. If you are allergic to latex, please let your sonographer know, and a latex-free condom or probe cover will be used.

After applying a lubricating gel, the transducer will be inserted a short distance into your vagina. This enables your sonographer to obtain high-definition images of the uterus, ovaries, and pelvic structures. This scan is well tolerated by most patients; it is more comfortable than a cervical PAP smear.

When will a transvaginal scan not be performed?

A transvaginal scan will not be performed if:

- The patient is not sexually active
- You decline the examination
- The patient is a child
- You are pregnant and your water has broken
- You have bleeding associated with placenta previa

If you have any concerns, please discuss these with your sonographer at the start of the examination.

Can I request a chaperone?

Qscan sonographers are all highly trained. Pelvic ultrasounds can be sensitive in nature, so a chaperone is available as an option for all patients. If you would like a chaperone present during any part of your pelvic ultrasound, please discuss this with your sonographer at any point during your appointment. You can ask for a friend or spouse to accompany you during the scan if you prefer.

How long will my pelvic ultrasound take?

Transabdominal and transvaginal ultrasounds both take about 10 minutes..

What happens after a pelvic ultrasound?

You will be able to resume normal activities after your ultrasound.

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