

Information for patients having a head and neck ultrasound scan

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a head and neck ultrasound scan. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is an ultrasound scan?

Our ultrasound scanner uses high frequency sound waves to create images of the soft tissues of the face and neck. It is the same type of scan performed on pregnant women to view images of their unborn child.

What happens during an ultrasound scan?

You will be seated in a dental chair and transparent gel will be placed on the skin of your face and/or neck. The ultrasound probe is moved gently over the skin. The images are displayed on a monitor and are viewed by our consultant radiologist. The ultrasound scan does not usually take more than 30 minutes.

Why should I have an ultrasound scan?

The scan will provide us with images of the soft tissues which cannot be obtained using conventional x-ray equipment. Ultrasound is relatively simple, quick and comfortable. It is useful when we are examining soft tissues in the head and neck region e.g. salivary gland or thyroid gland.

What are the risks?

There are no known risks to ultrasound imaging. Please advise the staff if you may be allergic to silicon gel or latex gloves.

Are there any alternatives?

There are other forms of imaging, but these all involve either exposure to x-rays or more extensive or claustrophobic investigations. These further investigations may take some time to be arranged and could therefore hold up your treatment plan.

How can I prepare for my ultrasound scan?

There is no preparation required.

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

You should receive the leaflet, **Helping you decide: our consent policy**, which gives you more information. If you do not, please ask a member of staff caring for you for a copy.

Will I feel any pain?

This procedure is not painful, but you will need to remain still for the duration of the scan.

What happens after I have had the ultrasound scan?

After the examination you will be able to go home.

Your scan will be reported by our consultants and the report will be sent through to the healthcare professional who has referred you to us for the examination.

What do I need to do after I go home?

No special aftercare is necessary. You will be able to eat and drink and carry on all your normal activities.

What should I do if I have a problem?

In the unlikely event that you experience any problems following this examination you can contact the department from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm on 020 7188 1872.

Outside these hours if you are worried you should go to A&E.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

We do not usually require you to have any follow up appointments in our department. Normally you will have a follow up appointment arranged by the department or dentist who referred you to us.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your ultrasound, please contact our receptionist on 020 7188 1872 from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

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

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy's

e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Become a member of your local hospitals, and help shape our future

Membership is free and it is completely up to you how much you get involved. To become a member of our Foundation Trust, you need to be 18 years of age or over, live in Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Wandsworth or Westminster or have been a patient at either hospital in the last five years. To join:

t: 0848 143 4017

e: members@gstt.nhs.uk

w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

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