Having a transvaginal ultrasound scan

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about having a transvaginal ultrasound scan and includes a consent form. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Having a transvaginal (internal) pelvic ultrasound

You have been referred to have a transvaginal (internal) pelvic ultrasound scan/examination to help find the cause of your problems. A specially designed ultrasound probe the width of a tampon is inserted into the vagina in order to obtain high definition images of the uterus and ovaries. It is similar to having a smear test, however it should not be as uncomfortable.

You DO NOT require a full bladder for this procedure. Having a period does not affect the examination. If you are using a tampon, this will need to be removed prior to the vaginal scan.

Important
If you are a virgin or unable to tolerate an internal scan you will be offered a transabdominal scan instead. For this you will need a full bladder and you will need to drink one litre of water one hour before your appointment to fill your bladder. Try not to empty your bladder fully if you cannot hold the water.

What to expect when you have your transvaginal ultrasound examination

You will be asked to undress from the waist down and covered with a sheet. If you are wearing a skirt, you may prefer to just remove your underwear. The ultrasound probe is covered with a protective sheath. A small amount of lubricating gel is applied to the probe and then it is gently inserted into your vagina. The ultrasound probe will be moved into different positions in order to look at the uterus and ovaries. The sonographer may also need to perform a transabdominal pelvic ultrasound, which is where some gel is applied to your lower abdomen and this area examined.

Your scan appointment is usually booked for 15 minutes, however the time it takes may vary depending on how clear the pictures are. Although every attempt is made to scan you on time, delays may occur due to unforeseen circumstances.

What happens after the scan?
The sonographer will send the results of the examination to the doctor who referred you. You will need to make an appointment (if one is not already in place) with the referring doctor to get your results.
What are the benefits of having this type of scan?
Internal scans are closer to the body part being examined, therefore they provide us with higher definition images which can help in making a more accurate diagnosis.

Are there any alternatives?
A transabdominal scan, performed with a filled bladder, is an alternative examination.

Are there any risks?
No.

Consent - asking for your consent
We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. The sonographer/radiologist will ask you if you are happy for the scan to go ahead - this is called consent. 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. If you do not wish to have the scan or are undecided, please tell the sonographer/radiologist.

It is your decision and you can change your mind at any time. Please bear in mind that not having the scan may delay your diagnosis. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

A chaperone will be present for all intimate scans performed by male sonographers/radiologists. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member to be present throughout the scan if you wish.

Students/trainees may be present during the examination but only with your verbal consent. Please remember that you can ask the sonographer/radiologist any questions you may have at any time before, during or after your scan.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Useful sources of information

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about coming for your ultrasound scan, please contact radiology reception, t: 020 7188 5490 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm):
- Choose Opt 1 to cancel and not rebook your appointment
- Choose Opt 2 to reschedule or book a new appointment
- Choose Opt 3 for test results
- Choose Opt 4 for patient transport
- Choose Opt 5 for general enquiries

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.
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8801 (PALS) \hspace{1cm} \textit{e:} pals@gstt.nhs.uk
\textit{t:} 020 7188 3514 (complaints) \hspace{1cm} \textit{e:} complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.
\textit{t:} 020 7188 8815 \hspace{1cm} \textit{e:} languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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.
\textit{t:} 111

NHS Choices
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.
\textit{w:} www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust
Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.
\textit{t:} 0800 731 0319 \hspace{1cm} \textit{e:} members@gstt.nhs.uk \hspace{1cm} \textit{w:} www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership
Please fill in the form below and bring it to your appointment. By signing this document you are giving your consent to having this procedure.

Remember it is your decision and you can change your mind at any time. Your wishes will be respected at all times. If you would like to read our consent policy, please ask a member of staff.

LMP (first day of your last menstrual period): ............................................................

Are you allergic to latex: Y ☐ N ☐

Have you been exposed to any FGM (female genital mutilation): Y ☐ N ☐

I hereby give consent to undergoing this transvaginal pelvic ultrasound:

Name: ...........................................................................................................................

Hospital number: ...........................................................................................................

Signature: .....................................................................................................................

Date: ............................................................................................................................