11-14 Week Ultrasound Scan

What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves that the human ear cannot hear. The sound waves produce echoes and these are used to create an image of your baby.

Is it safe?

Ultrasound has been used for 30 years for monitoring pregnancies. As far as we know ultrasound is safe for both you and your baby.

How is the scan performed?

An abdominal (stomach) ultrasound probe is used to scan your baby. Occasionally the view of your baby is not very clear and then it may be necessary to perform a vaginal (internal) scan.

Why do I need an ultrasound scan?

There are several reasons why we offer an ultrasound scan to all women between 11-14 weeks of pregnancy:

- To see the baby’s heart beating
- To check whether there is just one baby
- To accurately calculate the date when your baby is due to be born
- To check your baby is developing correctly and does not have any visible abnormalities at this stage of pregnancy
- To offer screening for Down’s syndrome by measuring the very thin film of fluid under the skin at the back of your baby’s neck called the nuchal translucency (NT)

Does everyone have a scan?

We offer the scan to everybody, but you do not have to have it if you do not want to. Before you make up your mind it may be helpful to read this leaflet and the ‘Screening tests for you and your baby’ leaflet.
How clear will my scan be?

The quality and detail of the image obtained can be affected by many things including the position of your baby, the amount of fluid around your baby and your BMI (body mass index). If the sound has to pass through an increased amount of body tissue (skin, fat and muscle) the image obtained may not be very clear, making it more difficult to measure the baby and see abnormalities.

What are my options?

1) No early scan.
2) A scan to accurately work out your baby’s due date, check your baby’s development and detect certain abnormalities. This is called a 12 Week Dating Scan.
3) An NT scan and blood test, which does everything in choice 2, and in addition is a screening test for Down’s syndrome. This is called the Combined Test.

Are there any other scans offered during pregnancy?

We offer everyone a scan at 20-22 weeks of pregnancy to check that your baby is developing correctly. This is called an Anomaly Scan. The ‘Having a mid-pregnancy ultrasound scan?’ leaflet gives you a lot more information to help you decide whether to have the scan or not.

What is a 12 week dating scan?

This scan is performed between 11-14 weeks and can accurately calculate the date when you baby is due to be born. This scan has been proved by research to be more accurate than using your last menstrual period dates, and we will use this scan date throughout the rest of your pregnancy. You will need a full bladder for this scan.

Will you tell me if my baby has any abnormalities during the 12 week dating scan?

Yes, the sonographer will tell you if they have found an abnormality with your baby. Please be aware that if you choose this scan you may be informed that your baby has an increased chance of having a chromosomal problem such as Down’s syndrome. If any abnormalities are seen you will be offered an opportunity to be counselled about the findings and a plan of care will be discussed with you.
What is the combined test?

This scan (nuchal translucency) and blood test are offered to identify pregnancies at an increased chance of having Down's syndrome. More information about the combined test can be found in the NHS ‘Screening tests for you and your baby’ information booklet. The results of the combined test take about 5 days to be calculated, as we have to send the blood away to a specialist laboratory. You do not need to have a full bladder for this scan. Due to the test involving two parts you may be here for up to 1 hour.

Is there any more information about Down’s syndrome screening?

The NHS ‘Screening tests for you and your baby’ has a whole section about the screening and gives you a list of websites and telephone numbers to contact for further information. Your midwife can also give you information and you are very welcome to discuss the screening test with the Antenatal Screening Co-ordinator on 01305 255822.

Can I bring anyone with me to the scan?

Yes, your partner or a close friend is welcome to accompany you. Children are generally not encouraged to attend ultrasound examinations as they may distract you or our staff. Scanning requires a lot of concentration, especially if your baby is very active – it is for this reason that scanning is carried out in a quiet, dimly lit room.

Can I have a picture of my baby?

Yes, there is currently a charge of £5.00 for two pictures of your baby. Please bring 5 £1.00 coins with you for the machine, as we are unable to give any change. Thank you.

Parking at the hospital

The hospital car park is very busy and it can be difficult to find a parking space at times. Please leave plenty of time to find a parking space. Alternative parking is available in the market car park, which is approximately a 5-10 minute walk away.

PLEASE BRING YOUR WHITE HAND HELD NOTES WITH YOU TO THE SCAN DEPARTMENT.
Further information

Maternity Unit telephone number: 01305 254267

If you need any further information please speak to your midwife or contact the Antenatal Screening Co-ordinator on 01305 255822.

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail pals@dchft.nhs.uk

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk

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