



Diagnostic Imaging

Infant Hip Ultrasound Examination

Why has my baby been sent an appointment for an ultrasound of the hips?

To check that your baby's hips are developing normally. It is felt that your baby has a slightly higher risk of Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH) (where the joint of the hip does not form properly in babies and young children) either because:

- The doctor/midwife who examined your baby after they were born, or at the 6-8 week check, may have suspected a problem with your baby's hips, or
- If there are any other risk factors that may affect hip development, for example first degree family history, (parent, sibling or child with the condition) or a breech delivery.

What is an ultrasound examination?

This is a simple, non-painful examination which uses high frequency sound waves transmitted through the body from an ultrasound probe. The sound waves build up a picture on a television screen. It uses the same technology as the scans performed during pregnancy.

Are there any risks?

Ultrasound has been used for medical examinations for many years and is considered safe.

Preparation

There is no special preparation for this test, but a feed before the examination may help your baby feel more settled, as some babies can become restless during the examination. You may wish to arrive a little early for your appointment in order to do this. If your baby is bottle fed or uses a dummy, then please bring these with you. Please also bring spare nappies/wipes as your baby's nappy may need to be removed for the examination.

How long will it take?

The ultrasound examination will usually take between 10-15 minutes to complete. You will be able to stay with your baby throughout. There are no side effects or after effects.

Who performs the examination?

The examination will be performed by either a sonographer or consultant radiologist. A radiography assistant will also be present in the room.

What will happen during the procedure?

You will be asked to partially undress your baby and they will then be placed on their side in a specially designed cradle. Warm, clear ultrasound gel will be applied to the skin over the hip joint and the ultrasound probe will be moved gently over the skin while pictures are taken. The baby will then be turned over and the same process repeated for the other hip. Both hips are always examined.

When will I get the results?

You will be given the results of the scan at the end of the examination. Your baby's results will usually fall into one of the three categories below:

- If your baby's hips are normal (mature), then no treatment or follow up will be required
- Some hips are still immature at this early stage of their development and a rescan will be needed for the hips to be reviewed as your baby grows. The timing of the follow-up scan will be discussed with you at the examination
- If your baby's hip joints are found to be very shallow or dislocated, your baby will be immediately referred to the paediatric physiotherapist based in the Children's Centre. The paediatric physiotherapist will usually see you on the same day to start treatment with a Pavlik harness (soft splint that keeps hips and knees bent and thighs spread apart).

What if I decide not to bring my baby for the scan?

This is not recommended. DDH can usually be corrected in a relatively simple way if the problem is detected early. This is why we ask you to bring your baby when they are so small. If DDH goes undetected, it is much more difficult to correct when your baby is older, with more likelihood of long-term complications.

Car Parking

Please be aware that car parking can be difficult at busy periods. We suggest you allow plenty of time to park before your appointment.

About this leaflet

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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Williams Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2JY
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