



Ultrasound Nil by Mouth

Information for Patients

How should I prepare?

It is very important that you do not eat or drink for six hours before your appointment time, except for sips of plain water.

If you are a smoker, try not to smoke in this six hour period.

Diabetic patients

Diet-controlled: follow the preparation information - no other special precautions are needed.

Tablet (non-insulin) controlled: follow the preparation information and carry on with your medication as normal.

Using insulin: if you use either insulin injections or tablets, follow the preparation information, but do not take your medication while you starve. Bring some food and medication with you to take after the scan.

How does ultrasound work?

Ultrasound travels freely through fluid and soft tissues. When it meets a more solid surface, some waves are reflected as an echo. The strength of the echoes depends on how dense the body tissue that reflected them was.

The echoes are used to create pictures of the area being scanned. The ultrasound waves are sent and received by a small hand-held device, known as a 'probe'. The probe is attached to an ultrasound machine that looks like a large computer on wheels, with a screen and a built-in keyboard.

The ultrasound waves are high frequency sounds that can't be heard by the human ear.

What does it involve?

You will be asked to lie on a couch and a gel is applied to the area being scanned to ensure good contact. A small hand held probe is placed against the skin around the area of interest.

You may need to change into a gown or arrange your clothing to give access to the area being scanned.

There is no pain associated with the scan, although occasionally pressure from the ultrasound probe can cause minor discomfort.

The scan rooms use a low-level of lighting to help the person scanning see the screen of the ultrasound machine.

Who will be there?

The ultra-sonographer or consultant radiologist who carries out the examination will be with you in the room. You may also meet one of our imaging assistants.

How long will it take?

Typically 15 to 30 minutes. Appointments are made using average times, but the time that an ultrasound scan takes depends on a number of things. This can cause delays to appointments, but it would be very rare to spend more than one hour in total in the Diagnostic Imaging department.

Are there any risks?

No, there are no known risks and ultrasound is considered very safe. No X-rays are used.

When do I find out the results?

If the scan was requested by your family doctor (GP), then the results will be sent directly to them. We aim to do this within ten days.

You may need to make an appointment with your GP to discuss your results - please check with your doctor's surgery.

If the scan was requested by a hospital consultant, the result will be sent to them and will be available at your next appointment.

If you are being scanned as an emergency department patient, an inpatient or a 'fast-

track' clinic patient the results will be available to the team looking after you shortly after the scan.

Further information

If you need to cancel, change your appointment or have any concerns/queries about your examination, please contact the Ultrasound department on: 01737 768511 x1611 or x6023 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Directions, parking and travel information for East Surrey Hospital, Crawley and Horsham Hospital is available on our website at www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk/finding-us/

Contact Us

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Diagnostic Imaging Department
East Surrey Hospital
Redhill Surrey RH1 5RH
Tel: 01737 768511
www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone: 01737 231 958

Email: pals@sash.nhs.uk

Write to: PALS, East Surrey Hospital
Redhill, Surrey RH1 5RH

You can also ask a member of staff to contact PALS on your behalf.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats, including in larger text. Contact: 01737 231 958 for help.

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