



Musculo-Skeletal Ultrasound Scan

Your doctor has referred you for an ultrasound scan. The information in this leaflet should explain what will happen before, during, and after this investigation and also answer any questions that you may have.

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan provides a 'picture' of the inside of the body using high frequency sound waves above the audible range of the human ear (what you can hear). These sound waves pass through the skin and are 'reflected' by the internal organs and tissues producing 'echoes'. These 'echoes' are converted to an image, which appears on a screen. The sound waves are produced and detected by a small hand-held sensor (sometimes called a probe or transducer), which is moved over the skin and is able to show an area at different angles.

Ultrasound can be used to investigate many parts of the body, including the shoulder, feet, fingers, elbows, and legs.

Are there any risks?

Ultrasound is considered very safe and there are no known risks.

Before your scan

There is no special preparation for a musculo-skeletal scan. You do not need to stop eating and can continue taking any prescribed medication.

What will happen during the scan?

Depending on the area being scanned, you will either be asked to sit or lie on the ultrasound couch. The room lights will be dimmed so that the sonographer can see the screen more clearly. A gel will be applied to the area being scanned. This allows the sensor to glide easily over the skin and improves the quality of the ultrasound image. The sensor is moved slowly over the surface of your skin. You may be asked to turn into different positions or move slightly to allow a different view of the area being investigated. The sonographer may have to press the sensor quite firmly over the area being examined. While the scan itself is painless you may find some discomfort, if this is necessary. At the end of the scan the gel will be wiped off. Although this gel is water based, it is best if you do not wear clothing that could mark or stain easily (you will be able to remain in your own clothing and will not need to change into a hospital gown). Your scan will usually take between 10 and 30 minutes, although this can vary.

After your scan

There are no after effects from an ultrasound scan and you will be able to return to your normal daily activities.

When will I get my results?

You will not normally be given the results on the day of the scan. A report will be sent back to the doctor that referred you. Your doctor should have the results in around 7 days.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about your scan or the information in this leaflet, please contact the Medical Imaging Department – you will find our telephone number on your appointment letter. We will do everything we can to make your visit as pleasant as possible.