

Maternity ultrasound

Having a maternity scan

Information for patients

Please visit www.imperial.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity-services for the latest information on our maternity services, including scans.

One named support person can attend your ultrasound scans with you. Please do not bring children or any other family members otherwise your appointment may need to be rebooked.

Please do not attend the hospital or scan if you or your support person are unwell. Please call the maternity helpline for advice on 020 3312 6135.

What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound scans use sound waves to build a picture of your baby in the womb. They are used to:

- check your baby's size, which gives a better idea of how many weeks pregnant you are. The ultrasound measurements can also inform your due date, which is originally calculated from the first day of your last period
- check whether you're having more than one baby
- detect any abnormalities

The scans are painless, have no known side effects and can be carried out at any stage of pregnancy. Please talk to your healthcare professional about any concerns you have.

For many women, ultrasound scans are the highlight of pregnancy, and it is very exciting to 'see' your baby in the womb. Please be aware that ultrasound scans may also detect problems with the baby so try to be prepared for that information.

Our sonographers will need to concentrate throughout the scan to carry out the necessary checks and measurements but will explain what they are checking at each stage. If the sonographer detects any problems or abnormalities, they will explain them to you and answer any questions you have. They will also refer you to the appropriate care team for further advice if required.

When will I have my scans?

We offer all women two ultrasound scans during pregnancy, and these usually fall between:

- 12-week scan (11-14 weeks)
- 20-week scan (18-21 weeks)

We will continue to offer additional scans where clinically necessary.

The first scan is sometimes called the dating scan. The sonographer estimates when your baby is due based on the baby's measurements. The dating scan can include additional tests, which are part of the combined test (screening for Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes). For more information, please refer to the booklet *Screening tests for you and your baby*, which you can find here: <http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/your-pregnancy-care/screening-tests/>

The second scan is called the anomaly scan or mid-pregnancy scan. This scan checks for any internal problems with your baby that are detectable at this time.

On the day of the scan

All visitors coming for an ultrasound scan appointment must:

- wear a face covering (available at the ultrasound reception)
- wash or gel your hands as soon as you arrive at hospital and when entering a ward or unit

If your partner is coming with you for your scan, they should remain with you throughout your time in hospital.

Please arrive **15 minutes** before your appointment time to register and check-in with the receptionist in the maternity ultrasound department. Your appointment letter will tell you which hospital to attend.

Please do not empty your bladder on arrival as it can be very useful and improve image quality if your bladder is reasonably but not uncomfortably full.

Can you tell me if I'm having a girl or boy?

If you want to find out the sex of your baby, you can usually do so during the 20-week scan. Please tell the sonographer at the start of the scan that you wish to find out. Please understand that the scan is a medical examination to look for structural problems with the baby and that checking the sex is not its primary purpose. The sonographer is not able to be 100 per cent certain of the baby's sex. If you would like to find out the sex of the baby it will be documented in your ultrasound report and, if you would like, we can tell you verbally too.

Can I have a picture of my baby?

Scan photos are available at £5 per image or £10 for three images. Please tell us during your scan if you would like to buy the photos.

Please note that as the sonographer needs to concentrate fully on examining your baby during the scan, filming is not allowed.

How long does a scan appointment take?

A scan usually takes around 20-30 minutes. However, it may take slightly longer if your baby is lying in a position that means it's hard to make measurements or is moving around a lot.

When will I get the results of the screening tests?

In most cases the sonographer will be able to tell you the results during your scan. However, if you choose to have the combined or quadruple tests (screening tests for Down's, Edward's and Patau's syndromes) we will send you the results in the post.

Occasionally, we may need to refer you to a specialist if the scan findings are inconclusive.

Do I have to have ultrasound scans?

No, not if you don't want to. We will respect your decision if you decide not to have the scans and your antenatal care will continue as normal. Please discuss any concerns at your first midwife appointment which should be before your first scan.

How do I cancel and rearrange my ultrasound scan appointment?

Please contact us as soon as possible by calling:

QCCH: **020 3313 3916** or **020 3313 8225**

SMH: **0203 312 5446**

or email imperial.matultrasound@nhs.net We can then offer this date to another patient and agree a new appointment date and time with you.

It is very important to attend your first midwife appointment. If you don't attend, your ultrasound appointment may be cancelled and this can delay your screening tests too.

If you no longer need the scan due to miscarriage or moving hospitals, please email imperial.maternitygynae.queries@nhs.net so we can cancel all your appointments.

Further information

This video explains what to expect at your appointment in more detail.

www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/what-happens-at-scans-and-will-they-tell-me.aspx

You can also find more information on scans here:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/ultrasound-anomaly-baby-scans-pregnant/

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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