

Maternity ultrasound

Having a maternity scan

Information for patients, relatives and carers

How do I cancel and rearrange my ultrasound scan appointment?

Please contact us as soon as possible by calling **020 3383 3916** or email imperial.maternityultrasoundref@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.

What is an ultrasound scan?

Ultrasound scans use sound waves to build a picture of your baby in the womb. The scans are painless, have no known side effects and can be carried out at any stage of pregnancy. 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 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 detect any problems or abnormalities they will explain them to you and answer any questions you have. The sonographer will refer you to the appropriate care team for further advice if required.

How long will a scan appointment take?

A scan usually takes around 20-30 minutes. However, it may take slightly longer if your baby is lying in an awkward position or moving around a lot.

When will I have my scans?

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

- 11-14 weeks
- 18-21 weeks

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 can be found at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/screening-tests-in-pregnancy/>

The second scan offered is called the anomaly scan or mid-pregnancy scan and usually takes place between 18 and 21 weeks of pregnancy. This scan checks for any internal problems with your baby detectable at this time.

When will I get the results?

In most cases the sonographer will be able to tell you the results of the scan at the time. 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 result in the post.

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

What can an ultrasound scan be used for?

An ultrasound scan can be used to:

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

Do I have to have ultrasound scans?

No, not if you don't want to. Some people want to find out more about their baby's health and development while others don't. We will respect your decision if you decide not to have the scans and your antenatal care will continue as normal. You should discuss any concerns at your first midwife appointment which should occur before your first scan.

Can I bring a partner, family member or friend with me to my scan during Covid-19?

At the moment we are asking women to come to their scan appointments unaccompanied due to Covid-19 precautions. Unfortunately, this means you can't bring children to your appointment. Although the Government guidance has recently changed to encourage Trusts to allow partners to come to scans, we still need to maintain physical distancing to keep our patients, partners and staff safe.

Many of our waiting areas and scan rooms are simply not large enough to allow for the two-metre distances we need to observe. We are working hard to find sustainable ways to overcome these challenges and we hope to be able to make changes soon. In the meantime, we will do all we can to accommodate individual patients' needs. We encourage you to speak to your midwife or care team if you need someone to accompany you to your appointments to support with communication or health or social care needs.

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 mid-pregnancy 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 and will only be able to verbally inform you.

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.

The sonographer needs to concentrate fully on examining your baby during the scan and thus filming is not allowed.

What happens on the day of the scan?

Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time to register, and follow the physical distancing rules (keep a two-metre distance from others), wear a face covering and sanitise your hands when you come into hospital.

Please 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.

This video explains what to expect in more detail.

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

You can also find more information on scans here:

<https://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), 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

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM.

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