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VASCULAR ULTRASOUND

Imaging Department



Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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What is ultrasound?

Ultrasound is very high frequency sound, inaudible to the human ear, which can be emitted and detected using an ultrasound machine.

The following information relates to the use of ultrasound for diagnosis.

Ultrasound can also be used by Physiotherapists for the treatment of soft tissue injuries but will not be described here.

How does it work?

Ultrasound is painless and harmless. It travels from a probe through the skin into the body and is reflected back when it reaches fluid, organs or bones inside. The echoes are detected by the same machine and a picture is generated which is immediately visible on a screen.

Is there any special preparation?

There is no special preparation.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown prior to the scan.

What does the scan entail?

Ultrasound is carried out by a Consultant Radiologist or specialist trained Radiographer (Ultrasonographer) skilled in the technique and interpretation.

You will usually lie on a couch in a darkened room and the doctor will place a hand held probe, the size of a small camera, on the skin over the area to be examined. Warm lubricating jelly is used so that the probe can be moved easily and to allow good contact with the skin.

Vascular ultrasound is performed to:

- help monitor the blood flow to organs and tissues throughout the body.
- locate and identify blockages ([stenosis](#)) and abnormalities like [plaque](#) or [emboli](#) and help plan for their effective treatment.
- detect blood clots (deep venous thrombosis (DVT) in the major veins of the legs or arms.
- determine whether a patient is a good candidate for a procedure such as [angioplasty](#).
- evaluate the success of procedures that [graft](#) or bypass blood vessels.
- determine if there is an enlarged artery (aneurysm).

Vascular ultrasound gives us unique information and is the best test to find out about the blood flow in your arteries and veins. You may also be offered other tests such as magnetic resonance angiography and x-ray angiography or venography to help with diagnosis.

How long will it take?

The actual scan takes 15 - 20 minutes.

Are there any side effects?

Ultrasound does not use X-rays or radiation. It is painless and safe and has not been known to cause any problems or complications.