

Guidance on Transvaginal Ultrasound Scans

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound examination obtains images of the body without using x rays. It is of great use in pregnancy.

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves which pass through the skin and are reflected by the body organs. With the aid of a computer these echoes are converted into a grey and white picture on a screen.

What is the benefit of having a Transvaginal scan?

- The examination will help the sonographer assess more fully and gain more accurate measurements.
- The scan can be performed where there is vaginal bleeding
- The scan is much more accurate at determining a fetal heart beat in early pregnancy
- The scan is much more accurate at determining any changes within the lining of the uterus (womb) and at assessing the ovaries and areas closely related structurally and functionally to the uterus

Are there any risks when having the Transvaginal ultrasound scan?

NO. The ultrasound is completely safe and has no known side effects.

- The transvaginal scan will not cause any problems in early pregnancy. Only the tip of the narrow ultrasound probe is inserted into the vagina, it is no bigger than a finger or tampon.
- There is a strict cleaning regime for the transvaginal probe and the disinfectant is used after every use.

Who does the scan?

The scan is performed by a qualified sonographer, Nurse, Midwife or Doctor.

What happens during the scan?

- If the pregnancy is less than 10 weeks by dates then a transvaginal scan will be necessary to assess the viability and dating of the pregnancy. A full bladder is not required and in fact the bladder should be empty
- The tip of the narrow ultrasound probe, covered with a sheath, will be gently inserted into the vagina. This is a simple and painless procedure and the probe is no bigger than a finger or tampon
- The transvaginal ultrasound should not be painful or distressing

Guidance

- When discussing a transvaginal scan with a customer it is important to be positive about the examination; do not say that you are *'sorry that they need the scan vaginally'* and do not to give the impression that it is only used if there is a problem.
- A transvaginal scan allows for much clearer pictures and diagnosis.
- Having a transvaginal scan while bleeding is not a problem.
- It will not harm the pregnancy and **definitely won't cause a miscarriage**.
- A transvaginal scan **does not hurt**. Dignity will be maintained during the procedure. Only the tip of the probe will be inserted and it's no different to inserting a tampon.

If the customer expresses concern, or declines a transvaginal scan, they must understand that if they are less than 10 weeks pregnant then abdominal scan may not be able to allow the sonographer to give a full and comprehensive report.

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