

**Patient  
Information**

# Ultrasound Viability Scan

## Introduction

An ultrasound scan is a test that uses high frequency sound waves to build a picture of your baby in the womb. Ultrasound scans are very safe and can be carried out at any stage of pregnancy.

Your ultrasound scan is a medical examination important for your wellbeing and that of your baby. The sonographer needs to concentrate fully throughout the scan to carry out the necessary checks and measurements but will explain what they are checking at each stage.

For many women, having a scan during pregnancy is an exciting and happy event but please be aware that ultrasound scans are also an opportunity for sonographers to detect some serious health conditions, so try to be prepared for that information.

## Why am I having a viability scan?

The purpose of a viability scan is to check:

- Your baby has a heartbeat.
- How many weeks pregnant you are.
- Whether you are expecting more than 1 baby.
- That the baby is growing in the right place.

## Preparation for the scan

So that your baby can be seen clearly, it is essential that you have a full bladder for your scan. One hour before your appointment time, please drink 500ml/1 pint of water.

**Do not empty your bladder before you have had the scan.**

If you attend your appointment with an empty bladder, the sonographer may not be able to complete all of the necessary medical checks.

Reference No.

**GHP11867\_11\_24**

Department

**Radiology**

Review due

**November 2027**

## Patient Information

### Can I bring someone with me to the appointment?

We allow **1 accompanying adult in the scan room** but we do not allow adults to swap in or out of the ultrasound room during the scan.

#### **Children are not allowed in the scan rooms.**

If you do attend with children, please make sure that you have a responsible adult with you who can care for your children while you have your scan. If you attend alone with a child, your scan will need to be re-booked. The department does not provide childcare.

Children cannot attend your scans for a number of reasons:

- They can often be distracting to the sonographer who needs a high level of concentration while they are carrying out important clinical checks. They could also distract parents while they are taking in essential information.
- We may need to do an intimate (vaginal) scan or if any problems are found, we will need to break difficult news, in either case it may not be appropriate to do so in front of your child. It can be distressing for children to witness their parents upset if anomalies or abnormalities are discovered.

### Can I find out the sex of my baby?

As this is a medical examination, we will only look and try to give you an opinion on the sex of your baby if asked. If you want to find out the sex, you can usually do so during your anomaly scan at around **20 weeks**.

Please understand that this is an NHS-funded scan and its purpose is to check for anomalies and abnormalities relating to you and your baby. We can never be 100% sure and checking the sex of your baby is not the primary purpose of the scan. It will depend on the position of the baby and other factors; therefore, the sex cannot always be seen. Additional scans will not be offered if we cannot give an opinion of the sex of your baby at the time of your scan.

## Patient Information

### **No photography or videos are allowed during the scan.**

This is for the following reasons:

- Anomalies and abnormalities may be revealed during the scan, which can be very distressing. It is not appropriate to record or photograph such events.
- Sonographers require high levels of concentration during the scan. Video recording and additional lighting from phones can be distracting and distort a sonographer's vision.
- The privacy of staff should be respected and they should be able to fulfil their job without being recorded.

### **Appointment times**

**Please arrive 10 minutes before your appointment time.**

On arrival, report to the receptionist so that you can be booked on to the system and any other relevant information given.

If you are late for your appointment, we may not be able to see you. Due to how extremely busy we are, we will try our best to fit you in but another appointment may need to be booked.

Women arriving on time will be given priority.

Always allow plenty of time to park and find the department. Please telephone the scan department if you know you will be late.

### **Contact information**

#### **Ultrasound Appointments**

Tel: 0300 422 2354

Tel: 0300 422 5099

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

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## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>