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INSPIRING HEALTH
Comprehensive medical centre

**ULTRASOUND
SCANS**

Q. What is an Ultrasound scan?

A. An ultrasound scan is a painless test that uses high frequency sound waves, which cannot be heard but are emitted and can be detected by special machines, to create an image of an organ or structure inside your body. There is no radiation (x-rays) involved in this scan.

Ultrasounds are commonly associated with pregnancy only. However, the test can be used on anyone (male/female), on various parts of the body.

Q. Why do I need ultrasound?

A. The scan will aid your doctor in accurate diagnosis and management your problem.

Q. Are there any alternatives?

A. An ultrasound is usually the initial examination. However, depending on the ultrasound diagnosis, the sonographer / referring clinician may request for additional examination like CT-Scan or MRI for confirmations on diagnosis.

Q. How is the scan done?

A. You may be asked to undress and wear a hospital gown depending on the region that needs to be examined. You will then be asked to lie on the ultrasound couch and the sonographer (radiographer specialising in ultrasound) or radiologist (doctor specialising in imaging) will explain the examination to you. The lights in the room will be dimmed to allow the Radiologist/ Sonographer to view the pictures on the screen more easily.

A section of your body will be exposed for the test and the technologist will apply a jelly-like substance to the area of examination; this may feel cold. The jelly helps the ultrasound probe to slide closely over the skin to give the best possible picture on the screen.

A probe (a very thick blunt pen) is then placed over the part of your body to be examined. At the end of the scan, tissue will be provided for you to wipe off the jelly.

The scan takes about 15-60 minutes depending on which part of the body is being examined.

Depending on the part of the body to be examined, there may be certain preparation required prior to the procedure.

The following are ultrasounds that are mostly requested by physicians:

1. *Abdominal ultrasound*

Used to examine the abdominal area and checks for any abnormalities in all the organs like liver, spleen, kidneys, pancreas, gallbladder and abdominal aorta.

2. *Pelvic Ultrasound (male and female)*

Done to help in evaluation of the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes and related anatomy in females and the prostate, urinary bladder in males.

3. *Breast Ultrasound*

The most common application of breast ultrasound is to investigate a specific area of the breast where a problem is suspected. This may be a palpable lump and/or a lump or density discovered by X-ray imaging (mammogram). The ultrasound is especially helpful in distinguishing between a fluid-filled cyst and a solid mass.

4. *Obstetric Ultrasound*

An ultrasound may be performed during any stage of pregnancy. In early pregnancy, an ultrasound is used to determine fetal age and viability. In the second and third trimesters, the ultrasound is used to evaluate the fetus, monitor fetal growth and position, check amniotic fluid, survey the placental location, etc.

You may be referred for an early scan because of pain, vaginal bleeding or spotting, or because you have had problems in a previous pregnancy. We do not normally scan before 7 weeks, however if we suspect an ectopic pregnancy you may be offered a scan from 6 weeks.

This may be performed abdominally and if still there is no diagnosis the sonographer may need to do an internal scan. There is no evidence that having a vaginal scan can cause miscarriage or harm the pregnancy.

5. Thyroid Ultrasound

Helps to diagnose a lump in the thyroid or a thyroid that is not functioning properly. The thyroid gland is located in front of the neck just below the Adam's apple and is shaped like a butterfly, with two lobes on either side of the neck. It is one of nine endocrine glands located throughout the body.

6. Scrotal Ultrasound

Ultrasound imaging of the scrotum is the primary imaging method used to evaluate disorders of the testicles and surrounding areas. It is used when a patient is experiencing pain or swelling in the scrotum, a mass has been felt by the patient or doctor, or there has been a trauma to the scrotal area. Some of the problems that ultrasound imaging can identify include: inflammation of the scrotum, an absent or undescended testicle, testicular torsion, abnormal blood vessels, or a lump or tumor.

Q. How can I prepare for an ultrasound?

A. Different examinations have different preparations. See below for the particular ultrasounds where some preparation is required prior to the scan. For other ultrasounds, no preparation will be needed unless your doctor or sonographer (person who does the scan) has informed you otherwise.

1. Abdominal Ultrasound

- Fast for at least six to eight hours prior to exam.
- Necessary medications may be taken with a small amount of water only.
- No chewing gum please.
- If you are diabetic, you may have one piece of dry toast and one glass of juice before a morning exam.
- If you are diabetic, you may have one piece of dry toast and one glass of juice before a morning exam.

- An ultrasound to evaluate only the kidneys does not require a six hour fast.

Foods and fluid in your stomach can make it difficult to get a clear image.

2. Pelvic Scan Preparations

You must have a full bladder before the pelvic exam can be performed. You are therefore advised to take at least 5 to 6 glasses of water 30 mins prior to exam. You should not empty the bladder once you have started drinking. After the ultrasound is done, you can then visit the bathroom to relieve your bladder.

In some cases, it will be necessary to perform an additional internal scan, (transvaginal scan- TVS/TRUS), especially if we need to assess the lining of the womb more accurately and any problems involving the ovaries, which have not been clearly demonstrated by the trans-abdominal scan for ladies and assessment of the prostate in men. This is generally not a painful procedure.

You will not be asked to have a vaginal ultrasound scan if you are unable to tolerate internal examinations or if you are not sexually active and are a virgin.

Q. What are the benefits of having the scan?

A. They are generally painless and do not require needles, injections, or incisions.

The ultrasound captures images of soft tissues that don't show up well on X-rays.

Q. Are there any risks or side effects?

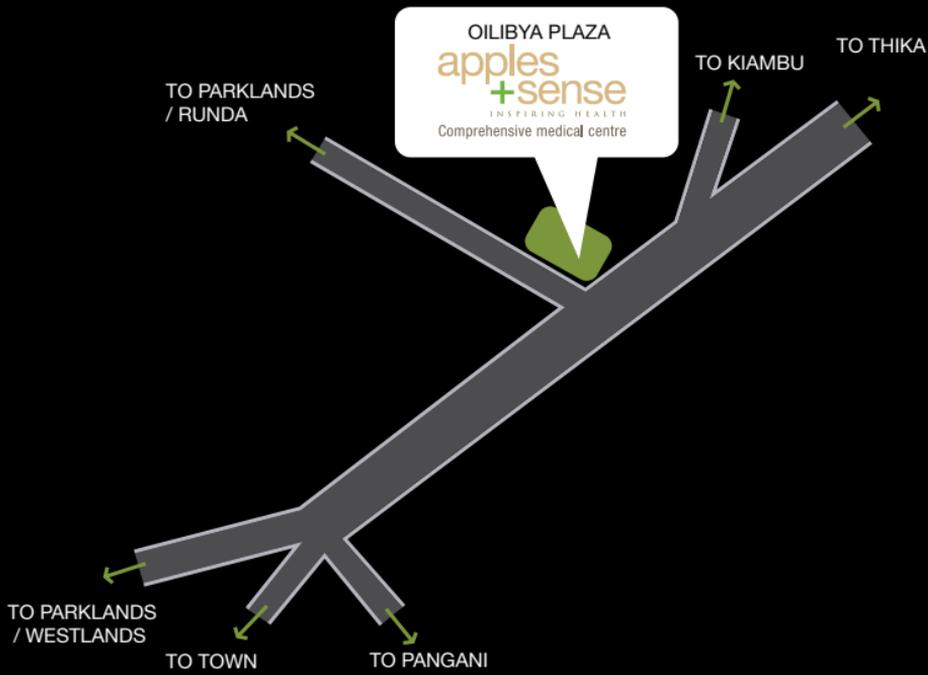
A. Ultrasounds have been used for over 30 years with no known side effects. However we do not recommend repeated ultrasound scans.

Q. What do I need to do after I go home?

A. You can go back to normal activity, including work and sports, straight away.

Q. What should I do if I have a problem?

A. Following an ultrasound you should not have any adverse after-effects to cause concern. However, we have included our contact numbers at the bottom of this sheet if you feel you need any advice.



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