



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Transvaginal ultrasound examination

Department of gynaecology

Patient information

What is a transvaginal ultrasound?

It is an internal scan. A probe is passed through the vagina looking at the womb/pelvic organs. It is the safest diagnostic tool producing a clear better image of the womb/pelvic organs. The procedure is slightly uncomfortable but painless. It has the advantage of producing clearer and better images than scanning over the abdomen. It a painless procedure.

How is it done?

Prior to the procedure, we will ask you to empty your bladder. With your privacy and dignity in mind we will ask you to undress from the waist down and place a towel/sheet over your pelvic area to maintain dignity. There will always be a chaperone in the scan room. The procedure is carried out with you lying on your back and your legs apart.

The probe (transducer) connected to the machine is cleaned in your presence and covered with a new sheath that is lubricated. It is gently inserted into the vagina.

Just the top of the probe needs to be in the vaginal cavity to create the image, the whole length of the probe is not passed into the vagina.

Does it hurt?

It is not a painful procedure and is well tolerated by the majority of our patients. You may feel slight discomfort but this can be avoided by relaxing your pelvic muscles. If you should experience pain, please let the person performing the scan know. The procedure will be stopped at your request.

Is it safe?

Yes. Ultrasound is a safe and (usually) painless use of sound waves to produce images (pictures) of the internal organs and structure of your body. They can be seen as black and white pictures on a television monitor. If you are bleeding, this will not prevent us from performing the examination, however if you are already bleeding and have an internal scan the probe might dislodge the blood sitting on the walls of your vagina which could result in heavier vaginal loss. The scan does not cause a miscarriage or increase the risk.

What happens if I don't have (or don't wish to have) a vaginal scan?

We will ask you to fill your bladder prior to your scan. We will scan abdominally (across your tummy) but this may not provide us with enough information to make a diagnosis on what is happening with your pregnancy. If this is the case we will arrange to rescan you at a later date when it may become clearer to make a diagnosis. Please bear in mind that if we cannot locate the pregnancy in your womb with an abdominal scan, we will ask you to reconsider and explain the importance of an internal scan.

Contact numbers

Royal Sussex County Hospital

(Main) **01273 696955** (EPU) **Ext. 64402**, Monday-Friday 8-4
(Day unit) **Ext.67242** (Level 11) **Ext.64013**

Princess Royal Hospital

(Main) **01444 441881** (EPU) **Ext. 68370**
(Horsted Keynes) **Ext.65685 / 65686**

If you have bleeding and /or pain you can get medical help and advice from:

- Your GP or midwife who may advise you to go to hospital.
- Your nearest EPU which can be found at www.earlypregnancy.org.uk/FindUS1.asp.
- Referral into the Early pregnancy unit is based on assessment by a health professional.

NHS CHOICES 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

The Miscarriage association

c/o Clayton Hospital, Northgate, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 3JS
01924 200799

BSUH NHS TRUST(2011) GP001 Early Pregnancy Unit Clinical Guidelines.
Patient UK Information leaflets www.patient.co.uk Women's Health Category
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists www.rcog.co.uk
National institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Clinical Guidelines:
Nice Pathways www.nice.org.uk

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

Ref. number: 427.7

Publication date: 01/2023

Review date: 01/2026

© University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust Disclaimer:
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

