



## Preparing for and understanding your abdominal ultrasound scan

You have been referred for an abdominal ultrasound examination. This guide will tell you about the procedure and help you prepare for the appointment.

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## What is an Ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan is a test that involves taking pictures of the body using sound waves. Ultrasound can be used to look at all soft tissue structures and blood vessels. Pulses of ultrasound are sent through the skin into your body which then echo ('bounce back') from the various parts of the body, creating an image. The scan is carried out by a radiologist or ultrasonographer and the images recorded and interpreted to make a diagnosis.

## Are there any side effects?

There are no side effects from this examination.

## Before your appointment

Some preparation is required prior to your examination.

Have nothing to eat during the six hours before your appointment. An hour before your appointment, drink at least one litre (2 pints) of water. Do not empty your bladder before the scan. It is important you have a full bladder for this examination.

If you are diabetic you must check with your GP or practice nurse if you need to change your medication because you are fasting for 6 hours. If you require assistance with language interpretation or would wish to be escorted by a friend, relative or carer, please advise the the clinic so that the staff can be ready for you. Please also let us know before the appointment if you would prefer to be seen by an ultrasonographer of the same sex. In order to provide an ultrasonographer of the same sex we might have to change your appointment.

## On arrival

On arrival one of our staff will explain the procedure to you and answer any further questions you may have. You may be asked to undress and put on an examination gown. You may prefer to bring your own dressing gown from home.



## The examination

You will be asked to lie down on a couch. Some lubricating gel will be applied to the abdomen. This gel enables the clinician to get better contact between your skin and the ultrasound probe. The probe is similar to a very thick blunt pen and is connected by a wire to an ultrasound machine and monitor. Pulses of ultrasound are sent from the probe through the skin to the part of the body under examination. The probe is gently moved over the surface of the skin and an image is produced on the monitor.

## How long will it take?

The length of time taken depends on the type of examination. Usually an ultrasound procedure will take between fifteen minutes and half an hour.

## When will I get the results?

The ultrasound report will be received by the doctor who referred you within four working days of your ultrasound scan.

You should telephone to confirm that they have received your report before arranging an appointment, unless the doctor has made different arrangements with you.

Occasionally you might be required to attend one of our specialist clinics, you will be told about this after you have had your scan.

## Giving your consent for the procedure

The information contained within this leaflet is intended to provide you with an overview of the examination or treatment that you are to receive. Prior to any medical procedure being carried out, the healthcare professional conducting the procedure will describe the nature of the examination or treatment you are to receive. It is your right to be given sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to continue with the examination/treatment or to refuse to undergo the procedure. Please ask any questions you may have.

**This examination requires your verbal consent only.**



## Informed consent

The information contained within this leaflet is intended to provide you with an overview of the examination or treatment that you are to receive. Prior to any medical procedure being carried out, the healthcare professional conducting the procedure will describe the nature of the examination or treatment you are to receive and will detail any risks associated with the procedure. It is your right to be given sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to continue with the examination/treatment or to refuse to undergo the procedure.

The nature of some examinations and treatment requires that your consent to continue must be given in writing and a form will be provided for you to sign. Some examinations may only require your verbal consent. For further information regarding our consent policy, please contact the Centre to which you have been referred.

We take pride in the standard of service which we offer at InHealth. If you do have reason to complain, however, we take your comments seriously and a full complaints procedure is available upon request. Please ask a member of staff at the Centre who will be able to provide you with a copy, alternatively call the Central Bookings line on 0845 603 0854 for a copy of the policy or to make a complaint. If you are unhappy with our handling of your complaint, you can contact the Healthcare Commission at: Healthcare Commission, Finsbury Tower, 103-105 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8TG.

**Alternatively you can telephone  
0207 448 9200 or visit...  
[www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk)**

## Data Protection

InHealth will keep the information you provide for internal purposes. We may also share the information you provide, but from which you cannot be identified, with those responsible for meeting your treatment or expenses (or their agents) for research, statistical, educational, administrative or contractual purposes (for example, audit and continuous improvement). This will include the National Health Service if you are a NHS patient.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the most recent Healthcare Commission report, please address your request to the Unit Manager.

If you have any comments or suggestions about our patient information leaflet, please also direct them to the Unit Manager.

This patient information leaflet is reviewed annually and patient observations are welcomed as part of that process. Braille, audio CD and large print versions of this leaflet are available on request.

## About InHealth Limited

InHealth is a leading provider of healthcare services operating exclusively in the UK working predominantly within the NHS, but also services the needs of private health care providers. The company vision is founded upon a desire to improve health care provision through the delivery of innovative, efficient, appropriate and leading edge services and by so doing, improving the health of the nation and the working lives of the professionals within it.