

# *Having a Transvaginal Ultrasound Examination* (page 1 of 2)

You have been advised to have a vaginal ultrasound examination. This leaflet is designed to explain what the examination involves. It may not answer all your questions, so if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to ask the staff who are doing the test – they are always glad to be of help.

## **What is an ultrasound scan?**

An ultrasound examination produces a picture of the inside of the body without the use of x-rays. It is a very safe technique, using high frequency sound waves which are transmitted through a part of the body and reflected back by the internal organs and structures. These 'echoes' form a picture on a television screen which will be interpreted by the person doing the scan.

The pelvic organs (uterus and ovaries) can be examined for any abnormalities and both normal and problem pregnancies can be monitored. Abnormalities which may show in ultrasound examinations include cysts, tumours and infections.

## **Why a Transvaginal scan?**

You may be familiar with the abdominal scan approach which needs a full bladder, also an ultrasound transmitter/receiver (transducer) is pressed on the abdomen which may be uncomfortable. The vaginal scan does not require you to have a full bladder and the transducer is close to the pelvic organs, so a good view is gained of the uterus, ovaries and fallopian tubes. The pictures are much clearer and there is greater detail.

## **What should I expect?**

No special preparation is necessary. You will not be asked to have this test if you have never previously had a vaginal (internal) examination. The examination can be done at any time during a woman's life – in pregnancy, during menstruation or after the menopause (change of life).

If you have any anxiety about this procedure, please discuss this with the staff doing the examination. Before the test you will be asked to go to the toilet and empty your bladder completely. This is because a full bladder may prevent a clear view of the pelvic structures. You will be asked to take off your underwear and put on a hospital gown.



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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### **During the test**

The examination room is usually slightly darkened; the scanning machine and screen, on which the images appear, will be beside the bed. Usually, only one person performs the test, and you can request a chaperone. You will be made comfortable on a couch and placed in a position that allows an internal (vaginal) examination to be done easily. Hospitals vary in the exact position in which they ask you to lie.

The vaginal transducer is disinfected before use. It is covered with a protective sheath and lubricated with jelly to make its insertion into the vagina easy and friction free. It is inserted very gently into the vagina – it will feel very similar to having an internal examination. By moving the transducer in various directions all the pelvic structures are displayed on the screen. While the transducer is being moved you may feel some minor discomfort but it is not a painful procedure. During the examination a hand may be placed on the lower abdomen to push the pelvic structures nearer the transducer so they can be seen more easily on the screen.

The time taken to do the procedure varies from 2 to 10 minutes.

### **After the test**

You may eat, drink and start normal activities as soon as you wish.

Sometimes the person doing the examination will be able to tell you the results, but in most cases a report will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the test.

**Information leaflets are written by the department of Clinical Radiology and compiled with the help of other members of Salisbury District Hospital united by our concern for your health**