

A Guide to your Ultrasound Scan. Vascular Laboratory, Outpatients Department 3 (OPD3), Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh

Tel: 0131 2423605

A Vascular Consultant has asked the Vascular Laboratory to send you an appointment. An Ultrasound Scan checks the blood flow within specific blood vessels in your body.

What is an Ultrasound Scan?

Ultrasound scans involve the use of sound waves to measure the blood flow along certain blood vessels within your body. There are no needles or radiation involved. This is not a Magnetic Resonance (MRI-machine with tunnel) or Computer Tomography (CT-‘doughnut’ shaped scanner) scan. For this ultrasound scan, you will be scanned on a bed in a spacious room (please see picture below).

How is an Ultrasound Scan Performed?

Cold ultrasound gel will be applied onto the skin over the area to be scanned (i.e. leg, arm or tummy).

An ultrasound probe (‘camera’) is then placed on top of the gel and moved along the skin. This ‘camera’ takes pictures of the blood vessels.



Photo of an ultrasound room



An Ultrasound Scan being performed

What is Vascular Disease?

Vascular disease encompasses a wide range of conditions that affect the arteries and, or veins in the body.

Vascular disease can cause arteries to narrow or even become blocked, resulting in pain at rest, or when walking. It can also lead to skin changes.

Varicose Veins can also cause skin changes such as discoloration, itching, swelling or ulceration.

Who will be performing my Ultrasound Scan?

A Clinical Vascular Scientist will be performing your ultrasound scan.

They are Healthcare Scientists, who are qualified and trained to assess blood vessels using ultrasound.

How do I find out my scan results?

The Ultrasound Scan images and a written report are reviewed by the Vascular doctor. The Vascular doctor will get in touch with you to discuss the results. They may either write to you at home, or send an appointment letter asking you to come back to the clinic to discuss.

Dressings

There are no doctors or nursing staff based within the Vascular Laboratory.

If you have dressings over the site to be scanned, we may need to remove it in order to take pictures. If you have bandaging that needs to be redressed after the scan, please contact the Vascular Laboratory as soon as your appointment letter arrives so that we can arrange for a nurse to see you once your scan is completed.

Vascular Laboratory contact number: 0131 2423605

Please bring a spare set of dressings with you to your appointment. This ensures that the correct dressings are used. The Vascular Laboratory does not stock dressings.

Types of Ultrasound Scans performed within the Vascular Laboratory

Lower Limb Arterial

Upper Limb Arterial

Graft Surveillance

Carotid

This scan looks at the blood flow within the arteries.

You will be asked to lie on a couch and remove your outer clothing around the area to be scanned. You will not need to remove underwear.

Approximate time of test: 30 mins-2 hours (Please refer to your appointment letter for specific time).

Lower Limb Venous

Upper Limb Venous

This scan looks at the blood flow within the veins.

To scan the veins in your leg, the couch you are lying on will be tilted upright so that you are in a standing position. You will be asked to remove your outer clothing around the area to be scanned). You will not need to remove underwear.

You will have the back of the couch, and some handles to hold onto for support. The scan can be paused at any time to allow for rest breaks.

Approximate time of test: 30mins-1 hour. (Please refer to your appointment letter for specific time).

AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) Surveillance

If this is your first scan, we will scan the main blood vessel in your tummy (the Abdominal Aorta) for the presence of an aneurysm. An aneurysm is a widening of the artery, where it is bigger than normal.

If you have previously been told you have an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA), the diameter of the aneurysm will be measured at this visit. This can be compared to your previous scan to monitor the changes of the Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Approximate time of test: 15mins



**Image of a tilted ultrasound couch
(Lower Limb Venous scan)**

Treadmill Test

During this test, we will record the pressures at your arms and ankles before and after you exercise on a treadmill. Everyone exercises at different speeds, from a brisk walk to a run; we will not ask you to exercise beyond your capabilities/limits.

Please wear shorts, or loose trousers that can be rolled up to allow access to your ankles. Please wear comfortable shoes.

Please contact the Vascular Laboratory with any concerns regarding your mobility.

Patient Transport

If you have a **medical/clinical need** for Patient Transport, telephone: **0300 123 1236*** up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your child's CHI number to hand (see top of appointment letter).

Hard of hearing or speech impaired? Use Text Relay: 18001-0300 123 1236*. (*Calls charged at local rates)

To cancel Patient Transport call: 0800 389 1333. (Freephone, 24-hour answer service)

Interpretation and Translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter for you. For a copy of this leaflet in a larger print, Braille or your community language, please telephone the Appointments Desk on 0131 536 0384.