

Your child's ultrasound

This information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about your child having an ultrasound scan. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives to the procedure, as well as what you can expect when you come to the hospital. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a healthcare professional caring for your child.

What is an ultrasound?

We use high-frequency sound waves (ultrasound waves) to create both moving and still images (pictures) of specific areas of your child's body.

What are the benefits of having an ultrasound?

This test can provide information that will help the doctor to make a correct diagnosis or decision about your child's treatment.

What are the risks?

Ultrasound examinations are non-invasive and involve the use of non-ionising radiation which means that there is no risk of harmful radiation exposure to your child. The ultrasound probes (cameras) will come into contact with your child's skin and we use aseptic techniques to keep them clean.

Are there any alternatives?

This depends on what your child is being tested for. There are other types of imaging scans such as X-rays, MRI or CT scans which can be used instead of, or as well as ultrasound. Different types of scans are useful for answering different medical questions. Ultrasound is best for looking at soft tissues, but is also helpful in looking at blood flow. The medical team will decide which is the best scan for your child, which is then checked by the imaging team to make sure it is the right choice.

Asking for your consent

We want to involve you in all the decisions about your child's care and treatment. You will be invited into the ultrasound room and the procedure will be explained. If you are happy to proceed, this verbally confirms that you agree to your child having the examination and that you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for your child.

What happens before an ultrasound?

Depending on the type of ultrasound scan that your doctor has ordered, your child may need to stop eating and drinking (fasting) for a few hours before the scan. This helps to see certain structures in better detail.

In some cases, your child may be asked to drink water before the scan to fill their bladder. The booking staff will give you instructions when the scan appointment is made. You will be sent a letter with the scan details, including the time of the appointment and any special preparation instructions.

What happens during an ultrasound?

The examination takes place in the Children's Imaging Department. A radiologist or sonographer (healthcare professionals who specialises in the use of ultrasonic imaging devices) will explain what the examination involves and then ask or assist your child to move into whichever position is best for the scan. This is usually lying down on the bed, but may involve sitting or both. As a parent or carer, you may be asked to support or hold your child in a particular position (this depends on their age). The ultrasound probe (camera) is directly applied to the part of the body being examined, so your child will be asked to expose this part of the body (eg tummy). You may need to help undress your child if they need assistance or are very young. The radiologist or sonographer will then apply some gel which helps the soundwaves to pass into your child's body.

Will my child feel any pain?

The ultrasound examination should not be painful. However, if your child is very unwell, they may be uncomfortable in certain positions. Please talk to your radiologist or sonographer if you are concerned.

What happens after the procedure?

You and your child will be able to leave the department after the scan. The radiologist or sonographer will review the images and write a report. This report will be sent to the referring doctor that originally requested the scan.

What do we need to do after we go home?

There is nothing that you or your child need to do when you go home.

Will my child have a follow-up appointment?

Your child may already have an appointment with the team who referred you, if not please contact them to arrange one to discuss the results of the test. If this is your GP, your child's results will be available from them in 7 to 10 days.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the ultrasound, please contact the Imaging Department, **t:** 020 7188 9218. Alternatively you can visit our website at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk or www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit, **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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