



Having a vascular ultrasound scan

Society for Vascular Technology

Information for Patients

Introduction

Please read your appointment letter carefully to check the time, date and which hospital location you must go to for your appointment. This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it contains important information and instructions.

What is a vascular ultrasound scan?

Your body's network of blood vessels is called the vascular system, which includes all of your veins and arteries. A vascular ultrasound scan examines peripheral blood vessels which are the blood vessels in your neck, arms, and legs.

A vascular ultrasound scan is a painless examination of the blood vessels using sound waves which are beyond our normal range of hearing (ultrasound). The ultrasound probe (transducer) is the part of the machine that is in contact with your skin during the scan. The transducer produces the sound waves that build up pictures of the blood vessels which can be seen on a screen.

The machine also uses something called the Doppler effect to measure blood flow through the blood vessels, which at times you may hear as a 'whoosh-whoosh' sound. The blood flow is also seen on screen as colour or waveforms.

There are no known side effects from having an ultrasound scan.



What will the scan show?

The scan allows us to check the blood flow through your blood vessels to see if there is any narrowing, blockages, other abnormalities, or to check the size of your arteries (aneurysm) that could be causing your symptoms.



What happens during the scan?

You will be taken into the room where the scan will be explained to you and you may ask any questions that you have about the scan. You will be asked to take off any clothing covering the area of the body to be scanned. Depending on the area of your body being scanned you may be asked to lie down or sit on the couch.

The scan will take place in a darkened room so we can see the pictures clearly on the screen. A water-based gel will be placed on your skin and the ultrasound probe will be passed over the part of your body being examined.

Do I have to go in a tunnel?

No, there are no tunnels or confined spaces involved.

Will it hurt?

No. For a routine vascular ultrasound scan there are no injections, needles, chemicals or x-rays. Depending on how deep the blood vessels are the clinical vascular scientist may sometimes have to press quite firmly with the probe, and this may feel a bit uncomfortable, but they will do their very best to keep any discomfort to a minimum.

How do I prepare for the scan?

There is no special preparation for the scan. You may eat and drink and take medication as normal. Hearing aids and pacemakers are not affected by the scan. It might help to wear loose fitting clothes so that clothes can be removed or moved out of the way.

Who will do the scan?

A specialist in vascular ultrasound (clinical vascular scientist) will carry out the scan.

As part of our teaching program it is helpful for students/trainees to attend some scans. You will be given the opportunity to let us know if you are not happy with this for your scan.

How long will it take?

This will vary for each patient, from around 10 to 60 minutes depending on the body area to be scanned.

What happens after the scan?

The gel can be wiped off and you can get dressed and go home. You may eat and drink and take medication as normal.



How do I get the results?

The results will be sent to the consultant who referred you. Where possible, the clinical vascular scientist will explain the results to you. If you are unsure how to get your results please ask a member of staff.

Can I bring a friend or relative with me to my appointment?

You may wish to bring a friend or relative with you. This may be useful if you need any additional assistance, however they may not always be allowed into the test room.

If you need to bring children with you to your appointment please bring another adult who can supervise them whilst you are having your test.

Special requirements

If you wish to book a chaperone, have any need for additional assistance relating to a disability, or need language or communication support, please call the telephone number given in your appointment letter as soon as possible so appropriate arrangements can be made to help support you.

How to give us your feedback

If you wish to make any comments about your visit, or if you have any suggestions about how services can be improved, please write to the department on your appointment letter or speak to a member of staff.

If you have any questions, write them down here to remind you what to ask:
