

Ultrasound examinations use sound waves to produce a picture or image onto a screen showing the inside of your body. An ultrasound is carried out by a trained health professional called a Sonographer with results interpreted by a Radiologist within a few days of your procedure.

The results from this test will help to guide the discussion between you and your doctor about any further investigation or treatment that might be needed.

A transvaginal ultrasound is an examination to see if there is any abnormality in the uterus (womb), cervix (the neck of the womb), endometrium (lining of the womb), fallopian tubes, ovaries, bladder or the pelvic cavity. It looks at the pelvic organs from inside the vagina using a special smooth, thin, handheld device called a transducer. This differs from an abdominal ultrasound, which uses a clear gel applied to the skin of the abdomen and the transducer is moved gently across the pelvic area.

Before Your Exam

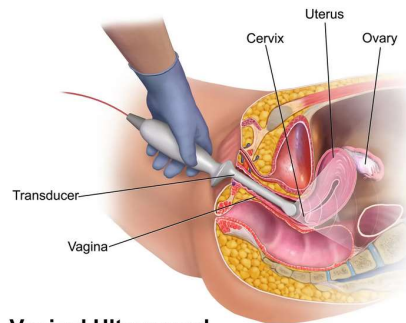
- Please leave your jewelry and valuables at home.
- Wear loose comfortable clothing to the appointment that gives easy access to the lower part of your body.
- Upon arrival, you will be asked to change into a gown. You will be asked to remove your underwear and whatever clothing item you have on your bottom half.
- No other preparation is required.
- You will be asked to go to the toilet and empty your bladder before the test being carried out.
- If you are having a period, the examination can still be carried out and it is often an advantage when assessing some gynaecological problems. If you are wearing a tampon, you will be asked to remove it.
- A transvaginal ultrasound is a personally invasive examination, so before having the test you will be asked to sign a consent form.
- You can request a chaperone to be present during the procedure.
- You can request the Sonographer that they tell you everything they are going to do before they do it.

During the Exam

- A transvaginal ultrasound usually takes anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes.
- You will be positioned on your back on the exam table.
You will lie down on an exam table with your knees bent, and have the lower half of your body covered with a sheet. (It should feel similar to your position for a pap smear test).
- The procedure is described in this handout (next page).
- The Sonographer will also explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have.

The Exam

A small, lubricated probe, called a transducer, will be inserted into your vagina. The transducer is inserted like a tampon. The transducer is larger than a tampon, but smaller than the speculum that your doctor uses for a pelvic exam. It is just a few centimeters wide (with the tip being wider than the rest) and about 12 inches long, but only the top few inches will actually go into your vagina. Before insertion, the probe will be [covered with a condom](#) (to keep it fluid-free) and lubricating gel (to make it easier to put inside you so it is as comfortable as possible). The Sonographer may request you to assist with insertion of the transducer.



Vaginal Ultrasound

During the exam you will feel a light amount of pressure. You may be requested to lie still, change positions, hold your breath or just breathe normally. During the exam, the Sonographer will move the probe around a little to get a better look at your insides so that might feel uncomfortable as well. The Sonographer will use side-to-side, up and down as well as rotational movements to bring different areas into focus. You might have your lower abdomen pushed with the Sonographer's hand to try and get some of the pelvic organs closer to the transducer for better pictures. If you have a pelvic pain condition like [vaginismus](#) or vulvodynia, you may experience more pain during this procedure. If you are worried about pain or you feel it during the exam, tell the Sonographer.

Sound waves will pass harmlessly through the skin from the transducer and will bounce off certain organs and tissue in the body creating "echoes." The echoes are reflected back to the transducer and onto a television monitor that shows images as the transducer converts the echoes to electrical signals. These moving images may be viewed immediately, recorded and/or photographed for physician review.

After Your Exam

- Once your ultrasound is done, the Sonographer will remove the probe. You can get dressed. The Sonographer will give you wipes to clean off any residual ultrasound gel.
- There should be no after effects of a transvaginal ultrasound. You may notice some slight vaginal discharge from the lubrication gel after the test, but this should stop within 24 hours.
- At the end of the test, the probe is fully sterilized and cleaned.

Risks and side effects

There are no known risks of having transvaginal ultrasound. It uses sound waves to obtain images and there is no radiation involved.