

# Patient Brochure

## Ultrasound

### What is an Ultrasound?

Ultrasound examinations can be performed on most parts of the body and provide excellent information about a variety of conditions - from pregnancy to gallstones, varicose veins and even muscle tears. During an ultrasound examination sound waves are bounced back from parts of the body (like sonar) to give black and white (or in some cases colour) images. The sonographer uses a transducer (a hand-held device which produces and receives the sound waves) to produce the images. Ultrasound shows anatomy in "real-time" showing movement.

### Preparing for your Ultrasound Examination?

It is necessary to make an appointment for an ultrasound examination. Examinations take approximately half an hour, but may take up to an hour depending on the type of examination your doctor has requested.

When you make your appointment a member of staff will explain the preparation necessary for the type of examination you require. Some examinations will require you to fast from food and fluids; others may require you to drink a quantity of water to ensure your bladder is full. Some examinations require no preparation at all.

If you are a diabetic please inform the staff when making your appointment. This will allow us to give you an appropriate appointment time if you are required to fast for your examination.

Please bring any relevant previous ultrasounds, X-rays or CT scans with you to your appointment. It is advisable to wear a two piece outfit for your examination, however, you may be required to remove some clothing and wear a gown.

### What happens during the Ultrasound?

The examination is performed by a highly trained sonographer, a person trained to obtain ultrasound images. The sonographer will explain the procedure to you and is happy to answer any questions. However, the sonographer is not a doctor and is therefore unable to discuss any results of the examination with you.

During the examination it is necessary to place some ultrasound coupling medium (commonly called gel) onto the skin to make contact with the ultrasound transducer (the probe that emits the sound waves). The transducer is then moved over the area to be examined to acquire the images. You may be required to roll into different positions and to hold your breath in order to achieve the best possible images. After the procedure, the gel is simply wiped off.

### How long does it take?

Our emphasis for ultrasound is on quality. Accordingly, our appointments are managed to ensure adequate time is scheduled to allow a quality examination to be completed and ensure a safe working environment for our sonographers.

Ultrasound examinations take approximately 30 minutes to complete. However, they may take up to one hour in some cases. In particular, ultrasound of the blood vessels may take up to one and a half hours.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR MEDICARE CARD AND REFERRAL FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT**