Kidneys and bladder ultrasound
Information for patients

Diagnostic Imaging Department
X-Ray and Scanning

Specialist Support
If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Health Information Centre Tel: (023) 9228 6757, who will advise you.
What is a ‘kidneys and bladder’ ultrasound scan?
An ultrasound scan is a method of obtaining images of your internal organs by sending inaudible high frequency sound waves into your body via a hand held probe which is placed on the abdomen (tummy). An image is then displayed and recorded on a monitor which is interpreted by the sonographer or doctor to assess whether there is any abnormality.

Why do I need a ‘kidneys and bladder’ ultrasound scan?
Your referring doctor has requested an ultrasound scan so that we can examine your kidneys and bladder to help in the diagnosis of a problem or condition that you may have, for example repeated kidney infections or stones.

Is an ultrasound scan safe? Are there any risks?
There are no known harmful effects from having an ultrasound scan.

What if I cannot attend for my appointment?
If your appointment is not convenient please phone X-ray and Scanning on 023 9228 6000 ext: 4110 (Mon-Fri, 08.30-17.00) so that a more appropriate time can be arranged.

What preparation do I need to do for the scan?
You need to have a full bladder for this scan. Please drink about 2 pints of water over the hour before your appointment time to achieve this.

• You may eat normally.
• Please continue to take any prescribed medication at the normal time.

If you are diabetic - please contact the X-ray and Scanning Department for advice (telephone number above).

Where should I come for the test?
Please come to X Ray and Scanning, C Level, North Entrance, Queen Alexandra Hospital, and report to reception where you will be directed to the ultrasound waiting area.

Please ensure you arrive on time. If you arrive late we may not be able to see you and your scan will have to be reappointed.
Can I bring a relative or friend?
If you wish to bring a relative or friend they may wait in the waiting room whilst you are scanned. However, if for a particular reason you would like them to accompany you into the room during the scan then please ask the member of staff who calls you for your scan.

How long will the scan take?
The examination will usually take between 10 –15 minutes but please allow to be in the department for up to one hour in case there are unexpected delays.

Who will I see during my scan appointment?
Your scan will be performed by a sonographer (a radiographer who has had specialist training in medical ultrasound) or a radiologist (a doctor who specialises in diagnostic imaging). Sometimes a radiographer or doctor undergoing training in ultrasound will carry out your scan but they will always be supervised by a qualified member of staff.

An imaging department assistant will also be present in the room.

What will happen during my scan?
• You will be invited into the scan room and made comfortable on the examination couch. You will be asked to adjust your clothing in the abdominal area so that your skin is exposed. Sometimes you may be asked to put on a hospital gown instead.
• The room will be dimly lit during the examination to get the best pictures.
• The sonographer or doctor carrying out the scan may ask you a few questions about your symptoms and why you were sent for the scan.
• He/she will sit or stand next to you in front of the ultrasound machine. A small amount of water-based gel will be placed on your skin and a hand held probe will be moved over your abdomen to enable examination of your internal organs by displaying the images on the monitor.
• You will be asked to roll onto your side to see the kidneys.
• After the scan you will be given paper towels to wipe off the gel.
• An ultrasound scan should be painless although a little pressure is applied by the sonographer or doctor when moving the probe over the abdomen in order to obtain the images required.

When will I get the results?
• If your GP referred you for the scan please allow 2 weeks before making an appointment to see the GP to discuss the results.
• If a hospital doctor referred you then your results will be available at your next appointment with them.

Consent – What does this mean?
Before any doctor, nurse or therapist examines you they must have your consent or permission. Consent ranges from allowing a doctor to take your blood pressure, (rolling up your sleeve and presenting your arm is implied consent), to signing a form to say you agree to the treatment or operation. It is important before giving permission that you understand what you are agreeing to. If you do not understand please ask. More detailed information is available on request.

How to comment on your treatment
We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer your questions. However, if you have any concerns you can also contact the Patient Experience Service on 0800 917 6039 or E-mail PALS@porthosp.nhs.uk

Information we hold about you and your rights under the Data Protection Act
Please refer to the booklet ‘Your Healthcare Information – Your Rights! Our Responsibilities! for further guidance.

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