



ULTRASOUND OF THE NECK

What to expect from your scan



What is ultrasound?

Ultrasound is an imaging technique that uses high-frequency sound waves and a computer to produce images of organs, vessels and tissues within the body.

An ultrasound machine sends out inaudible high frequency sound waves and listens for their echoes. The sound waves travel through your body and are reflected off the internal organs. The returning echoes are converted into a picture on a monitor. The pictures are constantly updated so the scan can show movement.

What is ultrasound of the neck?

This is a simple, painless scan. It is performed to look at the thyroid and parathyroid glands, lymph nodes and salivary glands, or to find out more about a lump/cyst.

Is this scan safe?

Yes, ultrasound is a safe, painless and accurate technique for looking at soft tissues of the neck. There are no known risks to ultrasound. It uses sound waves only and no radiation.

What are the limitations of this scan?

Ultrasound waves cannot pass through very dense structures and are weakened if they have to pass a long way through the body. It is therefore not effective at examining bones, and the quality of the images may vary from person to person.

What are the alternatives to this scan?

There are two other scans that can be used instead of ultrasound to look at the neck: CT scan (Computed Tomography) and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging).

These scans are usually reserved for more complicated cases, or when ultrasound has not been able to find the problem.

What can I expect during my scan?

A consultant radiologist will perform the scan. They will ensure you are in the correct position on the examination bed. They may dim the lights in the room so that we can see the pictures on the monitor more clearly.

The radiologist will apply some ultrasound gel to your neck to stop air getting between your skin and the probe (equipment that will send and listens to the echoes). It can be a little cold and can temporarily stain clothes so you may want to wear something easily washable. The probe is moved over the surface of your skin to obtain the pictures and you may be asked to change position during the scan.

If you have a problem with your salivary glands, you may be asked to drink a small amount of liquid that tastes like lemon. You will need to swirl it around inside your mouth for a few seconds and then either swallow or spit it out. The liquid helps stimulate the salivary glands. The scan will then be repeated.

How long will it take?

Ultrasounds of the neck typically take about 10-15 minutes.

What happens after my scan?

There should be no side effects. You may eat and drink as usual and return to your normal daily routine straight away.

How do I receive my results?

After your scan, if you are a private patient the staff will provide you with a CD of your images to take away. (We do not usually issue CDs for non-private patients, unless the doctor or consultant who referred you has asked us to).

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How do I receive my results? – Continued

A radiologist will write a formal report and send it to the doctor or consultant who referred you, usually within 48 hours. Your report will contain a summary of the radiologist's findings and their recommendations for further follow-up.

You will need to arrange an appointment to discuss your report with the doctor or consultant who referred you for the ultrasound.

Our chaperone service

All patients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure if they feel it is necessary. This chaperone may be a family member or friend.

Sometimes it may be necessary for a formal chaperone (for example, a trained member of staff) to be present.

Please let us know before your appointment if you would like a chaperone.

Further questions

If you have any further questions or worries please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of our team. Your comfort and safety is of utmost importance to us.

For further information, including contact details and directions on how to find us, please visit our website: www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com.

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We are committed to providing clean, safe premises for our clients in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infections and related guidance (December 2010) and all other Department of Health guidance.