

## Pelvic Ultrasound Scans



An ultrasound scan uses sound waves to make a picture of the organs and structures in the body. Those that are solid, such as the uterus and ovaries, show up clearly on a pelvic ultrasound scan. Bones or air filled organs, such as intestines, do not show up well on an ultrasound, and may also prevent other organs from being seen clearly.

There are two main ways in which a pelvic ultrasound scan can be performed:

- Transabdominal ultrasound - a small handheld device known as a transducer is spread back and forth over the lower belly. A transabdominal ultrasound is performed to look for large uterine fibroids or other large swellings.
- Transvaginal ultrasound - the transducer is shaped to fit into a woman's vagina. It gives clearer pictures of the uterus and ovaries because the transducer is closer to the pelvic organs.

Sometimes, both transabdominal and transvaginal scans are needed to look at the whole pelvic area.

For women, pelvic ultrasound scans may be performed to:

- Discover the cause of pelvic pain.
- Look for the cause of heavy, frequent or prolonged periods.
- Look for signs of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).
- Find an intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD).
- Look at the size and shape of the uterus and the thickness of the uterine lining.
- Look at the size and shape of the ovaries.
- Check for any lumps found during a pelvic examination.
- Check uterine fibroids found during a pelvic examination. A pelvic ultrasound may also be done to check the growth of uterine fibroids.

- A pelvic ultrasound may be used in the early stages of pregnancy, to check the stage of the pregnancy or to find a tubal pregnancy (ectopic pregnancy) or multiple pregnancies. Bristol Gynaecology does not provide a scan service in pregnancy, but they are available at the [Spire Hospital, Bristol](#).

We are happy to see patients with a request for a pelvic ultrasound scan from their GP. By being seen at Bristol Gynaecology, you will get the results of the scan, as well as a review of your symptoms from a senior consultant gynaecologist.