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On Behalf of Sterry Care Pty Ltd
ABN 52 134 020 072

Information Sheet - General and Pelvic Ultrasound

Reference documents:	DoHA Practice Accreditation Standards 3rd edition
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Introduction

Ultrasound uses sound waves to produce images. The sound waves are transmitted into your body from a small handpiece that looks a bit like a microphone (called an Ultrasound Probe). Some of these waves are reflected and are processed by the ultrasound machine to form pictures. This is the same way the navy looks for submarines. These pictures are shown on a TV screen and recorded.

Ultrasound has been around for about 60 years now and studies have shown that it is a safe technique with no harmful side effects.

Depending on the type of examination you are having you may need some preparation. For some scans you will be asked to remove your pants and underwear and lay on an examination bed with a privacy towel/sheet over you. The examination will be performed by a medical practitioner. A chaperone will be offered for all ultrasounds.

A jelly like substance is then placed on your skin on to the area of interest. The sound waves don't travel through air so this allows transmission of the sound waves into your body. The probe produces sound waves that will form the images. You will be completely unaware of these sound waves and there should be no discomfort during the examination apart from a little pressure.

You may be asked to hold your breath - this is very important because when you breathe the organs go up and down in the tummy. When you hold your breath the organs stay still allowing the doctor can get a better view of them.

Preparation

- There are varying preparations depending on the type of scan being performed.
- You may be asked to fast or come with a full bladder.
- Most other scans don't require preparation at all.
- You will be told what to do when you make your appointment.
- A standard scan at this practice can be performed within your scheduled time allotment but please allow a little extra time as sometimes it can take a little longer than anticipated.

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Female Pelvis

The best technique for looking at the female pelvis is by performing an internal scan. This procedure is only performed with your consent and where appropriate for the area your doctor is concerned about. The doctor will explain in detail what is involved. Remember, you are under no obligation to have this done although the ovaries etc are seen well and clearer images are taken. The sterilised probe which is also covered by a protective sheath is inserted into the vagina and manipulated very gently to show the anatomy in the pelvis.

Hygiene and Sterilisation of Equipment

Equipment is cleaned and sterilized between each use to the level required by the TGA using the Guidelines for the evaluation of sterilants and disinfectants. This is to minimise the risk of Healthcare acquired infections. Cleaning processes and protocols are developed and staff is trained to become familiar and competent with them.

TRANSABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND

To minimise cross infection the following is required:

- **Hand hygiene**
Hand hygiene must be performed before and after each patient contact.
- **Cleaning of the ultrasound transducer**
After each use the cleaning of the transducer probe is completed using warm water and mild detergents to remove all gel and visible residue and dried with a soft cloth.
- **Patients with wounds and/or abrasions**
A disposable transducer cover should be used; in the event that disposable covers are not available or in the event of blood or bodily fluid contamination, the protocol for probes used for intra-cavity ultrasound applies.

INTRACAVITY ULTRASOUND

In general, intra-cavity ultrasound poses an increased risk of cross-infection compared to transabdominal scanning. The following scanning procedures carry significant risk of cross infection due to contact with mucous membranes and/or blood or body fluids:

- Transvaginal
- Transrectal
- Intracavity and wound
- Transoesophageal

Intra-cavity ultrasound transducers are categorised as class II b, semi-critical reusable instruments requiring high-level instrument grade disinfection or sterilisation when appropriate. High level disinfection is necessary even when a single use disposable probe cover is used routinely, due to either identifiable or occult breach/perforations of the transducer cover.

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To minimise cross infection the following is recommended:

1 Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is an absolute pre-requisite to all reprocessing. A disposable glove must be worn on the hand holding the transducer.

2 Transducer Covers

Inform your doctor if you have a latex sensitivity. The transducer is covered before insertion. Our cavity probes are covered using condoms that are at least 38 microns thick.

Cleaning

Cleaning of the transducer prior to disinfection is crucial as it reduces the microbial load making the disinfection process more effective. All intra-cavity transducers must then undergo high level disinfection as a minimum standard in accordance with Therapeutic Goods Association using the Guidelines for the evaluation of sterilants and disinfectants and the Cleaning Ultrasound Machines and associated probes (DIAS 1.6) Plaza Medical Policy.

Results

Your scan will be read and reported by a doctor. The report will then be recorded in your medical record. Because the images are digital (just like a digital camera) we will keep them in our notes, and they are backup to a secure network drive at the practice.

You need to discuss the results with your doctor.

Healthcare acquired infections

Healthcare inquired infections from the use of ultrasound equipment are rare, and processes and protocols derived from best practices, clinical governance bodies, quality improvements and training are used at Plaza Medical. However in the event that an infection occurs appropriate management plans, collaboration and monitoring of patients will occur following best practice guidelines. For more information on Healthcare acquired infections visit Australian guidelines for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-guidelines-prevention-and-control-infection-healthcare-2019#block-views-block-file-attachments-content-block-1>