

Fertility Tests for Women



Ultrasound imaging

About ultrasound

Ultrasound is a very useful way of obtaining information about the uterus, the fallopian tubes, and the ovaries. Ultrasound can be performed in two ways – either ‘transabdominal’ where an ultrasound probe is placed on the surface of the abdomen, or ‘transvaginal’ where a special narrow probe is passed into the vagina.

Transvaginal ultrasound is commonly used in imaging of the reproductive organs as it comes very close to the uterus, tubes, and ovaries and provides very accurate images.

What can ultrasound provide information about?

The uterus

Ultrasound can provide very detailed information about the size and shape of the uterus. It can detect whether conditions such as fibroids are present in the wall of the uterus. Ultrasound can also provide information about the ‘cavity’ of the uterus, where the pregnancy is carried in a normal pregnancy. It can provide information about the shape and size of the uterine cavity, and whether problems are affecting it, such as the development of polyps or the growth of fibroids into the uterus.

The ovaries

Ultrasound can provide very accurate and detailed images of the ovaries, including whether conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) are affecting the ovary. It can also detect cysts, tumours, conditions such as endometriosis in the ovary, and inherited conditions such as the lack of an ovary.

Are there special techniques with ultrasound?

Saline contrast sonography

When there are concerns about the shape of the uterine cavity, or the presence of polyps or fibroids affecting the cavity, injecting a small amount of sterile saline through the cervix and into the uterine cavity can allow a more detailed image to be obtained. This is often useful if surgery is being contemplated.

Hystero-Contrast Sonography (HyCoSy)

Using a special ‘contrast’ – a fluid that is very easy to see with ultrasound – it is possible to try to pass the fluid through the fallopian tubes. If the fluid passes through, this can provide reassurance that the fallopian tubes are not blocked.

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