



Having a DVT ultrasound

You have been referred to the Ultrasound Department for a procedure called a DVT ultrasound (sometimes called a doppler or duplex) to find out whether or not you have a blood clot, called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) in one of the veins in your leg, We will explain how we test the blood flow within your leg veins to detect whether there is a blood clot in this leaflet.

What is an ultrasound?

An ultrasound is a test that uses high frequency soundwaves (so high you can't hear them) to create an image of the part of your body we need to look at. Ultrasound scans are very safe and do not use x-rays to generate an image. When you have an ultrasound scan, the healthcare professional will apply a gel to your skin for use with a probe that moves across your skin. The gel creates a seal between your skin and the probe, giving better images, as the soundwaves aren't very good at travelling through air.

What is a DVT ultrasound?

A DVT ultrasound scan is a non-invasive test that uses ultrasound waves to show blood flow within your veins. It is able to assess the flow of blood through your veins and can detect if there is a blood clot. Most commonly, a DVT scan is performed on the veins in your leg. However, we may assess other veins, depending on the reason for the scan.

Preparation for the scan

The procedure will be performed by a healthcare professional who is either a sonographer or a radiologist. Please be aware that the healthcare professional performing your scan may be of a different gender to yourself. A chaperone will be present throughout your examination. Before we start your examination, we will discuss your individual requirements with you.

The Royal Berkshire Hospital is a teaching hospital so you may be asked if you are happy for supervised trainees to be present during your scan. It is okay to say no if you prefer them not to be there.

When you come in for your appointment, wear loose-fitting clothing over the area being scanned.

Please note that children are not allowed in the scan rooms. If a child needs to come with you to your ultrasound, please organise for a responsible adult to supervise them in the waiting area.

During the scan

You will be welcomed into an ultrasound room and asked to confirm your details. The rooms are dimly lit to help us see your images clearly on the screen.

You will be asked to lie on a couch and lower your clothes to expose your leg. You will be given paper towels and asked to tuck these into the legs of your underwear. This is to protect your clothes from the ultrasound gel we apply to your skin and helps to protect your privacy and dignity during the scan.

The healthcare professional may ask you some questions about your symptoms, past medical history or medication.

The healthcare professional will use the ultrasound probe to assess the veins in your leg from your groin to just below your knee.

They will need to press the probe quite firmly to be able to assess the veins (particularly as the veins become deeper towards your knee). They may also gently squeeze your calf while they perform the scan. This is to control the blood flow and may give better images of your veins.

The scan shouldn't hurt but can be tender when the probe is pressing against your skin.

If you feel any discomfort during the scan, please let the healthcare professional know.

After the scan has been completed, you will be given some paper towels to wipe the gel off your skin before getting dressed.

Results

The healthcare professional will review your images after the scan. A report will be sent to the clinician who referred you for the scan who will contact you to discuss the results.

Contacting us

If you have any questions or concerns before your appointment, please telephone the Radiology Department on 0118 322 7991. This line is open Monday to Friday 8am – 4pm.

If you have come directly from a clinic and have any questions or concerns, please speak to your healthcare professional when you are called for your scan.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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Andrea Adamson, Clinical Specialist Sonographer, July 2024.

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