

Information for Patients

Ultrasound scan of the eye

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan is a very useful diagnostic instrument that uses sound waves to diagnose conditions at the back of the eye.

Where is the ultrasound scan carried out?

The ultrasound clinic is situated in Module A of the outpatients department on the ground floor of the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. Please report to the reception on your arrival.

What does the test involve?

This test involves the use of a probe, which is placed gently on your eyelid or eye and converts sound waves into digital information to form an image on a screen. This information assists the doctor in diagnosing the problem with the back of your eye.

Two different scanning machines might be used during the ultrasound examination. Both scans are completely safe and painless. These scans are known as the 'A' and 'B' scans. The 'B' scan is most commonly used as it gives the doctors more detail of the back of the eye.

'B' Scan Method

Once seated on a chair lubricating jelly will be applied on your closed eyelid. To prevent the jelly running down your face, the chair will be tilted backwards. A probe is then placed over your closed eyelid, scanning your eye. This information is displayed on a screen and printed for your case notes.

‘A’ Scan Method

The scan involves a local anaesthetic to be dropped into the eye to be scanned. A small probe is then placed very gently on the conjunctiva (the skin covering the white of your eye). You will not feel this probe as your eye will be numb from the drops. Again this information is displayed on a screen and printed for your case notes.

General Information

The examination takes about 10 minutes. There are no side effects following this examination.

You should eat and drink as normal before this examination and take your prescribed medicines as usual.

Can I drive after the test?

It is advisable that you do not drive yourself to this appointment as, although the ultrasound test does not involve the use of dilating drops, it is possible that the doctor might wish to examine your eyes further by dilating your pupils, which will blur your vision temporarily for 6–8 hours.

When will I know the results?

When the results have been studied a report will be sent to your consultant. If you are attending an out-patient clinic on the same day, the results could be discussed with you then, otherwise a further appointment will be sent to you if required.

If you have been referred from another hospital your results will be sent there and they will need to arrange any follow up care you require.

If you have any questions regarding this information please contact a member of staff on (0161) 276 5543, Monday – Friday, 8.00 am – 5.00 pm.