

# Having an ultrasound scan to check blood flow in your arm

Vascular Studies Unit

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

Please read your appointment letter carefully to check the time, date and which hospital you must go to for your appointment. This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it contains important information and instructions.

## What is a vascular ultrasound scan?

Your body's network of blood vessels is called the vascular system, which includes all of your veins and arteries.

A vascular ultrasound scan is a painless examination of the blood vessels using sound waves which are beyond our normal range of hearing (ultrasound). The ultrasound probe (transducer) is the part of the machine that is in contact with your skin during the scan. The transducer produces the sound waves that build up pictures of the blood vessels which can be seen on a screen.

The machine also uses something called the Doppler effect to measure blood flow through the blood vessels, which at times you may hear as a 'whoosh-whoosh' sound. The blood flow is also seen on screen as colour or waveforms.

There are no known side effects from having an ultrasound scan.



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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## **What will a scan of my arm show?**

The scan allows us to check the blood flow in your arm to see if there is any narrowing, blockages or other abnormalities of blood vessels that could be causing your symptoms.

## **What happens during the scan?**

You will be taken into a room where the scan will be explained to you and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions. You will be asked to take off some clothing so your neck, shoulder and arm can be seen and you will be asked to lie down or sit on the couch. Sometimes during the examination we may ask you to change the position of your arm whilst we scan.

The scan will take place in a darkened room so we can see the pictures clearly on the screen. A water-based gel will be placed on your skin and the ultrasound probe will be passed over your arm, moving from the neck area down to the wrist.

Both arms will be scanned if requested on your referral or if we need to compare them.

## **How do I prepare for the scan?**

There is no special preparation for the scan. You may eat and drink as normal. Hearing aids and pacemakers are not affected by the scan.

It will help to wear loose fitting clothing which can easily be removed or moved away from the area to be scanned.

## **Who will do the scan?**

A specialist in vascular ultrasound (clinical vascular scientist) will carry out the scan.

As we are a teaching hospital, students may also be in the room. If you do not want any students to be in the room during your appointment, please let us know.

## **How long will it take?**

This will vary for each patient from around 10 to 30 minutes for each arm, and can take up to 1 hour for both arms.

## **What happens after the test?**

The gel can be wiped off and you can get dressed and go home. You may eat and drink normally.

## How do I get the result?

The results will be sent to the consultant who referred you. Where possible, the clinical vascular scientist will explain the results to you. If you are unsure how to get your results please ask a member of staff.

## Can I bring a friend or relative with me to my appointment?

You may wish to bring a friend or relative with you, or to take you home from the Vascular Studies Unit. This may be useful if you do not speak or understand English very well or if you have any special needs. However, they may not always be allowed into the test room.

We are not able to offer childcare facilities. If you need to bring children with you to your appointment please bring another adult who can supervise them whilst you are having your test.

## Special requirements

If you have any special needs relating to a disability or need language or communication support, please call the telephone number given in your appointment letter as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements to help support you.

## Shops and refreshments

Refreshments including hot/ cold drinks and snacks are available in the hospital. Please ask a member of staff for directions.

## Contact details

**Vascular Studies Unit:** Level 1, Glenfield Hospital, Groby Road, Leicester LE3 9QP

For queries and appointments: 0116 258 5440 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

## Further information

Our webpage on the Leicester's Hospitals website can be viewed here:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/departments-services/vascular-studies-unit/>

## How to give us your feedback

If you wish to make any comments about your visit to the Vascular Studies Unit or if you have any suggestions about how we can improve our services, please write to us or speak to a member of staff. You can also complete a comments card available in our reception.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Leicester's Hospitals is a research active trust so you may find research happening on your ward or in your clinic. To find out about the benefits of research and become involved yourself, speak to your clinician or nurse, call 0116 258 8351 or visit [www.leicestersresearch.nhs.uk/patient-and-public-involvement](http://www.leicestersresearch.nhs.uk/patient-and-public-involvement)