

Ophthalmic Ultrasound

Information for patients

What is ophthalmic ultrasound?

Ophthalmic ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves which are transmitted from a probe into the eye. Using different techniques we are able to take images of various structures within the eye and gain valuable information on these structures.

Why do I need this procedure?

Ophthalmic ultrasound is carried out to help diagnose or monitor ocular or orbital diseases. In certain conditions, the test is carried out to guide treatment. Ultrasound is also useful when it is not possible to obtain a clear view to the back of the eye. It may be required as a simple screening test prior to planned procedures such as cataract surgery.

What are the benefits?

The ultrasound scans allow us to assess the parts of your eye which may be difficult for the doctor to see in clinic. We are also able to take important measurements of the structures of the eye which may be used to monitor certain conditions.

Are there any side effects or risks?

Ophthalmic ultrasound includes various procedures which are all very safe. Some techniques involve the use of a local anaesthetic eye drop to numb the eye for approximately 20-30 minutes, so it is important you do not rub your eye during this time.

What do I need to know before having the procedure?

General screening scans are usually performed by placing a small amount of ultrasound gel, which is harmless, onto the closed eyelid and placing a probe over the eye. The ultrasound specialist may ask you to move your eyes in certain directions to help them obtain the scan(s) they need. This procedure is not painful and only takes a few minutes to perform.

Other scans that we carry out may involve scanning straight onto the eye. In this instance we will apply a local anaesthetic eye drop, and use artificial tears as the gel to avoid irritation to the eye. The practitioner will tell you which direction to look in, and may need to gently hold your eyelids out of the way. It is important that you stay still for this procedure. The procedure is not painful and only takes a few minutes.

When will I get the results?

The results will go straight to the referring eye doctor and they will suggest the most appropriate follow-up. You will be able to discuss the results and your treatment options with the referring eye doctor in clinic.

What if I have any questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns prior to or following this procedure, please telephone Leighton Hospital Switchboard on 01270 255141 and ask for the Emergency Ophthalmology Triage Nurse on call. Available Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust would like to thank Sheffield Teaching Hospital for their permission to use the information in this leaflet.

Printed March 2018 Review March 2020 Ref: SC/ECC/0460318

