

# Having an ultrasound scan to check blood flow in your leg veins

## Vascular Studies Unit

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: April 2025

Next review: April 2028

Leaflet number: 1148 Version: 2

### Introduction

Your appointment letter will tell you the **date and time** of your appointment. It will also tell you **the hospital you need to go to**.

This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it gives important information and instructions.

### What is a vascular ultrasound scan?

Your body's network of blood vessels are called the vascular system. This includes all of your veins and arteries.

A vascular ultrasound scan uses sound waves that are beyond our normal range of hearing (ultrasound). The ultrasound probe (transducer) is part of the machine that touches your skin during the scan. The transducer makes the sound waves that make pictures of the blood vessels. This will be seen on a screen. This scan is painless.

The machine also uses something called the Doppler effect. This is 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.



**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What will a scan of the veins in my leg show?

The veins in your legs are the blood vessels which carry blood back to the heart. The scan allows us to check the blood flow in these veins. The scan lets us check the blood flow in these veins for any blockages, or a problem with the direction of blood flow, that could be causing your symptoms.

## What happens during the scan?

We will take you into the room. We will explain the scan to you and you can ask any questions. We will ask you to take off some clothing so your legs can be seen from your groin to the ankle. We will then ask you to lie down or stand to allow us to check the direction of blood flow in your leg veins.

The scan is not painful. We may need to gently squeeze your calf to check the direction of blood flow in the veins. We may at times apply brief pressure on your leg using the transducer to make sure the veins are not blocked. We will explain this during the scan.

The scan will take place in a darkened room so we can see the pictures clearly on the screen. We will put a water based gel on your skin. We will then pass the ultrasound probe over your leg.

Both legs will be scanned if requested on your referral.

## How do I prepare for the scan?

You do not need to do anything to prepare for the scan. You can eat and drink as normal. Hearing aids and pacemakers are not affected by the scan.

We recommend you wear loose fitting clothing or clothing that can be removed easily. This will make it easier to scan.

Please tell us before your appointment if you have any bandages or dressings on your legs. We will need to make special arrangements for your appointment.

## Who will be doing 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 is different for each patient. The scan can take around 10 to 30 minutes for 1 leg. It can take up to 1 hour for both legs.

## What happens after the scan?

We will wipe off the gel and you can get dressed and go home. You can eat and drink normally.

## How do I get the results?

We will send the results 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 want to bring a friend or relative with you. They can also be the person taking you home after the appointment. Having this person can be useful if you do not speak or understand English very well. It can be helpful if you have any special needs. But they may not always be allowed into the test room.

We do not have childcare facilities. If you need to bring children with you to your appointment please bring another adult who can watch over them whilst you are having your test.

## Special requirements

Please call us if you have any special needs like a disability or language and communication need. Call the number on your appointment letter as soon as possible. We will make arrangements to help support you

## Shops and refreshments

You can get hot or cold drinks and snacks at 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)

## More information

Visit our website:

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

