

Having a Doppler ultrasound scan of your penis for erectile dysfunction

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital your appointment is at and directions to the ultrasound department.

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

Why do I need a penis Doppler scan?

A Doppler scan of the penis is an investigation to find out why there is a problem getting or keeping an erection. This common problem is called erectile dysfunction (ED).

Getting and keeping an erection relies on enough blood flow into the penis and staying in there. A helpful way of thinking about this is to imagine trying to fill a bath tub. The taps need to be turned on to allow water into the bath (inflow). A plug is needed to stop the water going out (outflow).

ED can have many causes, including inflow ED and outflow ED.

- **Inflow ED** is where the blood flow into the penis does not increase enough to get an erection. This is like the bath taps not turning on enough.
- **Outflow ED** is where the blood flow out of the penis does not decrease enough, so erection cannot be maintained. This is like the plug in the bath not working properly.

The Doppler scan is used to see if you have inflow or outflow ED. If you have inflow ED, medications called vasodilators can be used to treat it.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit 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

What is a Doppler ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound scan is an examination that uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of the inside of the body. The scan uses a small device called a probe. High-frequency sound waves from the probe bounce off different parts of the body. The echoes or reflections are picked up by the probe and turned into an image on the screen.

A Doppler scan uses ultrasound to examine the blood flow inside the body.

Asking for your permission (consent)

The doctor who referred you should have talked to you about the reasons for this scan and any other options with you.

You have been referred to a radiologist for this scan. Radiologists are doctors who have specialised in imaging and X-ray treatments. They will confirm that you understand why the scan is being done and the potential risks.

If after talking to the hospital doctor or radiologist you do not want to have the scan then you can decide against it.

How do I get ready for the scan?

- If you are on medication from your doctor please continue to take this as normal.
- If you smoke, please **do not smoke for 3 days before your Doppler scan**. Smoking affects the blood flow to the penis and could affect your scan.
- We advise you to wear loose fitting trousers such as track suit bottoms to your appointment.



What happens during the ultrasound scan?

- On arrival at the radiology department you will be directed to the ultrasound waiting area.
- You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.
- You will be taken into the ultrasound room where the Doppler scan will be explained. Please ask any questions that you have about the scan.
- You will be asked to lie down on the ultrasound table with your pants pulled down a short way.
- The Radiologist will use a very small needle to inject a vasodilator drug into the side of your penis. This drug makes the blood vessels wider and increases blood flow to the penis. This may cause you to develop an erection or partial erection within a few minutes.
- The Radiologist will then do the scan of the blood vessels in the penis. A water-based gel will be put on your penis and the ultrasound probe will be placed onto this area. You may hear some whooshing sounds from the ultrasound machine when the Radiologist is doing the scan. This is the sound the machine makes when scanning blood flow.

Who will be doing the scan?

A Radiologist (a specialised X-ray doctor) will carry out the examination. There may also be a radiology assistant in the room.

As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be present. If you wish, you can ask that the student is not present during your examination.

We fully appreciate that this is a procedure that deals with a very intimate problem. We try our best to provide you with privacy and will conduct the test to maintain your dignity. We will make every effort to make you feel relaxed and comfortable.

How long will it take?

The time for a scan will vary for each patient. It will usually take 20 to 30 minutes.

What happens after the examination?

You will be given some paper tissue to wipe off the gel. You can then get dressed.

You may be asked to stay in the waiting area for 15 minutes so we can check you are OK.

We may then ask you to stay nearby for up to 1 hour but walk around until the erection goes down.

We advise you to wear loose fitting trousers such as track suit bottoms to your appointment as it may take up to 2 hours for the erection to go down completely after the scan.

How do I get the results?

The results will not be given to you immediately. Your scan pictures will be looked at by the Radiologist and the results will be sent to the GP or consultant who referred you for the scan. We will explain how to get your results after your examination.

If you are an inpatient, the results will be sent to the ward.

What are the benefits of having a penis Doppler scan?

The ultrasound will help your urology doctor (the urologist) decide the cause of the ED and how to plan the treatment.

Are there any risks or side effects from the scan?

There are no known risks from the sound waves used in an ultrasound scan. Ultrasound scans don't have any side effects and are generally painless.

Possible risks or side effects from the injection:

- **Pain** - You may feel some pain or discomfort when the injection is given.
- **Bruising** - You may get a small bruise at the injection site.
- **Erection** - You may still have an erection after the scan but this should go within 1 to 2 hours.
- **Erection for longer than 2 hours** - There is a small risk of a persistent painful erection (priapism). This may happen in 1 or 2 in 100 people (1 to 2 %). Having an erection for too long means the penis will not be getting enough oxygen or getting rid of waste products.

Often the erection will subside if you run up several flights of stairs vigorously (if your health allows).



If you still have a rigid or painful erection 2 hours after the injection, please contact the urology nurse specialists on the phone number below.

What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any questions or concerns about the scan, you can call the ultrasound booking line on:

0116 258 8765 and select option 4. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.



After the scan, if you still have an erection or pain after 2 hours, or if you have any other concerns, call:

Urology Nurse specialists 0116 258 4635 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 3.45pm)

Your call may go to answerphone. Messages won't be collected outside of these hours.



Outside of these hours (or if haven't received a response to your previous answerphone message) telephone the Hospital Switchboard:

0300 303 1573 - and ask to speak to the Urology Doctor on call.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk