

Vascular ultrasound tests



Information for patients

Your doctor has referred you for a vascular ultrasound test. This leaflet explains what happens during the test, which you will have in the Vascular Laboratory at King's College Hospital.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Why do I need a vascular ultrasound test?

It will help your doctor to diagnose your condition and plan your treatment.

What type of test will I have?

You usually have an ultrasound scan. It is sometimes also called a duplex or a Doppler scan. It allows us to take a close look at the arteries or veins in your neck, arms, legs or abdomen (tummy). Sometimes we look at the blood vessels in your head.

Another test uses ultrasound and blood pressure cuffs together to measure the blood pressure in your arms and legs.

We may also ask you to exercise on a treadmill for up to five minutes at a speed you are happy with.

When will I have my test?

If your test is urgent, you usually have it within one – seven days of your doctor referring you.

Most tests are routine and we normally see you within one month of your referral.

Sometimes your doctor will refer you well in advance. So to make sure they have the most up-to-date results, we see you close to your next appointment with them.

On the day of your test we try to see you as close to your appointment time as possible. But sometimes you may have to wait because we have to carry out urgent tests.



What are the benefits?

The test will give detailed images of your arteries and veins and the blood flow through them. This helps your doctor to diagnose your condition and decide the best treatment.

What are the risks?

There are no known risks of having a vascular ultrasound test.

Are there any alternatives?

Vascular ultrasound gives us unique information and is the best test to find out about the blood flow in your arteries and veins. You may also be offered other tests such as magnetic resonance angiography and x-ray angiography to help with diagnosis.

Valuables

You can keep your valuables with you while you have your test.

What happens before the test?

One of the Vascular Laboratory team will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you have.

What happens during the test?

We will ask you to take off some of your clothes so we can access the area of your body we want to scan. We often need to be able to scan all of your legs or arms. You do not usually need to take off your underclothes.

We will ask you to lie or sit on a couch, or stand on the floor. The light will be dimmed and – depending on which part of your body is being scanned – you may be able to see the scan on a screen as it is being done.

One person will do the test, but other members of our team may be present and may check the test.

They will put a clear, water-soluble gel on your skin and slide the ultrasound probe over the area they are examining.

You will not feel any pain but you may feel some pressure because sometimes the probe needs to be pressed firmly against your skin to get a clear picture.

You may be asked to change position during the scan.

How long does it take?

It normally takes between 10 and 30 minutes.

Who will do the test?

A vascular scientist or clinical scientist will do your test. They have specialist training in using medical ultrasound.

Where is the Vascular Laboratory?

It is on the first floor of Cheyne Wing, between Twining and Lister wards, on the opposite side of the corridor.

Do I need to prepare for the test?

You do not usually need to prepare for a vascular ultrasound but if you need to we will tell you well before your test.

For example, if you are having a scan of your abdomen (tummy), we may ask you not to eat anything and to drink only clear fluids (not fizzy drinks) for 12 hours before the test.



What happens to the test results?

They will be stored in your hospital computer records. The doctor who referred you for the test will be able to access your results via their computer. The doctor will explain the results and the treatment they recommend at your next appointment with them.

Who do I contact if I cannot come to my appointment?

Contact the Vascular Laboratory on **020 3299 3711** as soon as possible to make another appointment.

Where can I get more information?

The Circulation Foundation

www.circulationfoundation.org.uk

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at
www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.

Produced by The Vascular Laboratory.