



Ultrasound scan of the leg veins for suspected DVT (deep vein thrombosis)

You have been referred to the Ultrasound Department for an ultrasound scan to check for a possible deep vein thrombosis (DVT), which is a blood clot in one of the deep veins in your leg.

What is an ultrasound?

An ultrasound scan is a non-invasive test that uses sound waves (so high, you can't hear them) to create images of the inside of your body.

Ultrasound scans are very safe and do not use X-rays. During the scan, a healthcare professional will apply a small amount of gel to your skin and use a handheld probe that moves over the area being examined. The gel helps create a seal between your skin and the probe, allowing clearer images to be produced, as sound waves do not travel well through air.

Preparation for the scan

- Your scan will be performed by a trained healthcare professional (sonographer or radiologist).
- The person performing your scan may be of a different gender.
- As a teaching hospital, you may be asked if a supervised trainee can perform or be present for the scan — this is your choice.
- Please wear loose-fitting clothing that can be easily removed from the affected leg.
- Children are not permitted in the scan room. If a child needs to come with you to your ultrasound, please organise for a responsible adult to supervise them in the waiting area.

During the scan

You will be welcomed into the ultrasound room and asked to confirm your details. The lights will be dimmed to allow the images on the screen to be seen clearly.

You will be asked to remove clothing to expose the affected leg, allowing access from your groin to just below your knee. You may be asked to lie on the examination couch or, in some cases, stand, depending on the area being assessed.

A paper towel will be provided for you to tuck into your groin. This helps protect your clothing from the ultrasound gel.

An ultrasound probe will be used to examine the veins in your leg. To assess the veins properly, firm pressure will be applied with the probe. This is an essential part of the test, as compressing the vein will help determine if a clot is present. Because of this pressure, the scan may feel painful, particularly if the area is already sore.

If you experience significant discomfort at any point, please let the healthcare professional know so they can adjust the pressure, where possible.

Once the scan is complete, you will be given paper towels to wipe away the gel before getting dressed.

Results

After your scan, a report will be sent to the clinician who referred you. They will discuss the results with you and advise on any further management required.

Contacting us

If you have any questions or concerns before your appointment, please telephone the Radiology Department on 0118 322 7991. This line is open Monday to Friday 8am-4pm.

If you have come directly from a clinic and have any questions or concerns, please speak to your healthcare professional when you are called for your scan.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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RBFT Radiology, Emily McLeish, Sonographer Practice Educator, July 2026

Next review due: July 2028