

Frequently Asked Questions during the COVID-19 Pandemic About Your Early Pregnancy Dating Scan (11⁺² to 14⁺¹ weeks) & Fetal Anomaly Scan (18⁺⁰ to 20⁺⁶ weeks) if you have chosen to have them

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the health service are doing everything possible to keep you and health board staff safe. We understand that some of this may be difficult for you. However, staff will be there to care for you and be able to answer any questions that you have. The Welsh Government has developed guidance, which sets out the baseline for visiting in Wales during the pandemic and acknowledges that health providers may have to depart from the guidance when required. The guidance is available at [Hospital visiting during the coronavirus outbreak: guidance](#). Please see below some questions and answers, which may be helpful to you at this time.

Should I attend for my early pregnancy dating scan and fetal anomaly scan appointments?

Yes, it is important that you attend your antenatal ultrasound appointments unless you are self-isolating. Guidance on why you need to self-isolate, how to self-isolate, how to get a test and how to look after yourself at home is available at [Staying safe and social distancing](#). Antenatal care is important in keeping women and babies safe in pregnancy.

If you have any [coronavirus symptoms](#) (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change of taste or smell), you should self-isolate at home and [get a test](#).

Please do not attend and follow self-isolation guidance. Contact your midwife on the telephone numbers you were given early in pregnancy.

Your midwife will advise you about arranging your ultrasound scan after your isolation period is over.

When can your partner/ nominated adult, accompany you to your early pregnancy dating scan and fetal anomaly scan appointment?

What are health boards doing to keep you safe?

Health boards in Wales have been following guidance from a number of recognised professional bodies, including The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG), The Royal College of Midwives (RCM), The Society of Radiographers (SCoR), The British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS) and The International Society of Ultrasound in Obstetrics & Gynecology (ISUOG).

To ensure your ultrasound examination can be undertaken safely some of the following guidance has been implemented:

- You and your partner/ nominated adult will be asked to wear a face mask/ covering, unless you have a reasonable reason not to wear a face covering.
- the sonographer performing your scan will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)
- the number of people/ health professionals in the ultrasound room will be kept to a minimum -
- following each examination, the ultrasound equipment, ultrasound couch and any highly touched surfaces are cleaned by the sonographer in accordance with local guidelines on infection control.
- the sonographer will change PPE and clean their hands according to local infection control guidance.

Where will my antenatal scan appointments take place?

Your ultrasound scan appointment may be moved to a different location within your health board. This will depend on whether your health board has changed the way they are delivering services, and on local staffing levels.

You will be informed of any changes to your appointment by your health board.

How will my ultrasound scan appointments be different?

When you attend for your ultrasound scan you and your partner/ nominated adult will be asked if you have symptoms suggestive of a Covid-19 infection or any reason that you should be isolating. The health professional may ask to check your temperature.

How will my ultrasound scan appointments be different?

When you attend for your ultrasound scan you and your partner/nominated adult will be asked if you have symptoms suggestive of a Covid-19 infection or any reason that you should be isolating. The health professional may ask to check your temperature.

Please do not arrive too early for your appointment, as this will reduce the time you have to wait in public waiting areas. To allow social distancing there will be some changes for example by ensuring that seating is at least 2 metres apart.

Will the sonographer be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when I come for my scan?

There is national guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE) for health professionals to reduce the spread of infection. This is to protect both you and the sonographer. The sonographer will be wearing a disposable plastic apron and disposable gloves which they will change between every person that they scan. They will also be wearing a surgical mask and may also be wearing protective glasses or a face protective visor.

In most cases, if you are self isolating, you will be advised not to attend your appointment and it will be rescheduled. However, sometimes you may need to attend for an ultrasound scan even though you are self isolating. If this is the case, your hospital might have a special ultrasound room set up for women or you may be asked to come for your scan at the end of the day to limit contact with other women.

In this case the sonographer will be wearing full personal protective equipment including a respirator mask, surgical gown, gloves and face visor.

Will I be able to video-link or record my ultrasound scan?

The professional bodies, including IUSOG and SCoR described above, do not recommend recording or live streaming ultrasound examinations. This is because video/phone recordings might affect the sonographer's concentration. The sonographer's priority is to ensure a safe and thorough clinical examination. Being filmed in any context can be distracting for them which increases the risk of missing something important during the scan.

Four of the professional bodies (SCoR, RCOG, BMUS and the RCM) have released a joint statement saying that they support local units looking at ways that women can share their experience, during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may differ in each health board. While they still do not recommend video calling or Skype, during the scan, health boards may have suggestions of other things that they can do locally to support the woman's experience.

Check with your ultrasound department if you are unsure about the arrangements in the unit that you are attending.

How will the sonographer discuss the results of my ultrasound scan with me?

As the sonographer will be wearing a mask, and you are unable to see her/his face, it will be more difficult to have a conversation at the time of the ultrasound scan. Once the scan is completed, the sonographer will write the report of your ultrasound scan to file in your maternity records. If a more detailed explanation of the ultrasound scan results is required, this will be explained to you where social distancing can be maintained.

What if there is an unexpected finding detected on my ultrasound scan?

If there is an unexpected finding on your ultrasound scan, the sonographer will tell you about the finding and will then ask the most appropriate health professional to discuss the findings with you. This might be a midwife or a doctor. You will be shown to a room where the findings of the scan can be discussed with you where social distancing can be maintained.

Updated V4
October 2021