

11-14 WEEK ULTRASOUND

A Guide for Patients/Families



**Section of Feto-maternal Unit
Division of Women and Child Health**



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال، کراچی

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi



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The 11-14 Weeks Scan:

The 11-14 weeks scan is a first trimester scan which is offered to all the pregnant women. It is performed by trans-abdominal route but in some cases when the view is not clear it may be performed by trans-vaginal route.

Why do I need the 11-14 weeks ultrasound scan?

Accurate gestational age and baby's heart beat is confirmed by this scan. Major structural defects related to chromosomal abnormalities are screened through this scan.

All women, irrespective of their age, have a small risk of delivering a baby with chromosomal abnormalities such as Down's syndrome etc. This risk increases after the age of 35 or with IVF (in vitro fertilization) conception or previous history of Down's syndrome.

How is the risk for chromosomal abnormality calculated?

- The risk for chromosomal abnormality will be calculated by taking into the account: maternal age and using ultrasound to calculate:
- Nuchal translucency (NT)
- CRL (Crown Rump Length)

However, blood sample can also be taken to evaluate the risk.

What is nuchal translucency?

It is the collection of fluid beneath the skin of the neck of fetus and it is present in all fetuses in early pregnancy. The fluid collection is however increased in Down's syndrome and other chromosomal and structural abnormalities.

What happens if the nuchal translucency is increased?

If nuchal translucency is found to be increased then a further test will be offered for examining baby's chromosomes by either amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling (C.V.S)

What happens if a chromosomal abnormality is diagnosed?

If a chromosomal abnormality is diagnosed then further options about the pregnancy can be explored and discussed with the doctor.

If chromosomal analysis is normal, can the pregnancy be continued?

A normal test excludes the risk for major chromosomal abnormalities. However, if the NT is raised there is still a 6% risk of a structural abnormality in the baby e.g. a congenital heart defect. For this reason a detailed anomaly scan for examination of the fetal anatomy is required at around 18-20 weeks. For most patients the anatomy is normal and the pregnancy progresses uneventfully.

Can this ultrasound be performed after 14 weeks?

Usually NT disappears and is not visible in the second trimester in the majority of patients. Therefore, it is offered in the late first trimester as there is only a narrow window of opportunity when chromosomal abnormality is evident. Therefore, NT is not offered beyond 13 weeks + 6 days.

Can I bring anyone with me to the scan?

Generally, your husband can accompany you. Children are not allowed to attend the scan as this may distract the staff and patient.

What are the risks for this scan?

Ultrasound has been used for many years for monitoring pregnancies. So far, the evidence has been reassuring that ultrasound is safe for both mother and baby. However, we think it is wise to scan only when there is good reason and to use the minimum amount of sound waves.

What are the prerequisites for this scan?

- You are requested to come on time for your appointment and get registered.
- If you fail to reach at the assigned time, a grace period of 30 minutes will be given after which the appointment will be cancelled or rescheduled according to next available slot.

What are the instructions for the ultrasound?

- Full bladder is not required, so you will be asked to empty your bladder prior to ultrasound.
- Fasting is not required.
- Nurse will guide you towards the scan room.
- The ultrasound will take 20-30 minutes following which you will be told about the findings and given the report.

For further information, please call:

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