This fact sheet will give you information about abdominal and pelvic ultrasound scans of your ovaries. Your GP has recommended that you have these tests so that your ovaries can be checked for any unusual changes. If you have further questions after reading this information you should speak to your GP.

An ultrasound scan creates a picture of the tissues and organs inside your body. A hand-held device called a transducer, which uses sound waves, is used to create the image, which will appear on a TV screen. Ultrasound scans are usually carried out by an ultrasonographer or a radiologist, and will often take place in the radiology department of your local hospital.

Your appointment letter will contain information about any preparations you need to make before your appointment so it is important to read the information carefully. For example you might need to have a full bladder for the abdominal ultrasound.

**Abdominal ultrasound**

You will be asked to lie down on an examination couch and to lift your clothes to uncover your abdomen (tummy). The ultrasonographer will put a clear gel on your skin; they will then move the transducer firmly but slowly across the skin of your tummy. The gel helps the transducer to move smoothly and for a clear picture to appear on the screen. You should not feel any pain during the abdominal ultrasound, but you may feel some discomfort if you have a full bladder.

**Pelvic ultrasound**

Also called a transvaginal ultrasound, this test is used to create a picture of your reproductive organs including your uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes and cervix. You will be asked to undress from the waist down and to lie down on an examination couch with your knees bent. The ultrasonographer will insert a small transducer probe into your vagina. The probe will be put in a protective cover and lubricated well before insertion. The ultrasonographer will press down on your tummy and gently move the probe to get a good picture of your pelvic organs. You may feel some discomfort during the pelvic ultrasound, but it should not be painful.

Ultrasound scans are very safe and you will be able to go home once your scans are complete. You can eat and drink immediately and resume sexual activity as soon as you feel ready.

“Ultrasound scans are quick and easy but they give your GP important information about the health of your ovaries.” Wendy, who had an ultrasound scan
**When will I get my ultrasound test results?**

It can take some time for the results to be ready. Your GP will let you know how long the results should take; they will also tell you how to find out the result of your scans. The examiner won’t be able to give you any results on the day. The ultrasound pictures will be examined by an ultrasonographer/radiologist. They will send a detailed report of their findings and recommendations to your GP. The information in the report will help your GP decide what action to take next. If you don’t hear anything within a couple of weeks, give your GP a call.

**What do the results mean?**

The ultrasonographer/radiologist will be looking for unusual changes to your ovaries including a change in texture, differences in size or visible lumps. Changes of this type can be caused by a number of conditions including cysts, endometriosis and sometimes by ovarian cancer.

The results of the ultrasound scans will help your GP decide what to do next. If any changes are seen that might indicate ovarian cancer, your GP will arrange for an appointment with a gynaecological oncologist for further tests and investigations to rule out or confirm ovarian cancer.

If you have not already had one, your GP might want to do a CA125 blood test. You can read more about this test in our CA125 factsheet. If your scan appears normal but your symptoms continue or worsen then you must go back to your GP and let them know, make an appointment for a check-up within one month.

**I have my period, can I still have a pelvic ultrasound scan?**

Yes. It is fine to have a pelvic ultrasound while you have your period. Just let the ultrasonographer know before they start the scan.

**Why do I need an abdominal and pelvic ultrasound?**

The ovaries are very small, about the size of large olives and they are buried deep within your pelvis surrounded by other organs. Sometimes it can be difficult to see the ovaries on an abdominal ultrasound; a pelvic ultrasound increases the chance of getting a clear picture that can be examined for unusual changes.

For more information about ovarian cancer please visit [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk), email [info@targetovariancancer.org.uk](mailto:info@targetovariancancer.org.uk) or phone [020 7923 5475](tel:020 7923 5475).