

# Abdominal ultrasound scan

## What is it?

A vascular ultrasound of your abdomen may also be called a duplex scan or Doppler. The aorta is the main artery that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. It has many branches. This test uses ultrasound to produce an image of your aorta and the branches. It is a safe and effective way to measure the size of the aorta and to assess the blood flow. The test should be painless but you may feel some pressure as the scientist presses on your abdomen during the test.

## Why am I having this test?

Your doctor has requested this test because they suspect you may have an aneurysm of your aorta. An aneurysm occurs when the walls of the blood vessel become weakened and causes a swelling or bulge. Aneurysms can occur in any artery but are most commonly seen in the abdominal section. This is known as an abdominal aortic aneurysm or AAA.

## How is abdominal ultrasound performed?

There is no preparation needed for the scan. A clinical scientist or trainee scientist (who may be male or female) will perform and interpret your ultrasound scan. We need access to your abdomen so you will be asked to lift your top up. Tissue will be tucked in to protect your clothing during the scan. The person doing the scan may have to press on your stomach to better image the vessel. This shouldn't be painful.



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

but if it is please let us know. The scan will take approximately 15-30 minutes.



### What happens next?

The clinical scientist or trainee scientist will comment on the findings and will write a report which will be available for the doctor or nurse who requested the scan. If you have a confirmed AAA then you will be entered into a surveillance program and we will either see you annually or three monthly depending on the size of the AAA.