

Women's Health Circle

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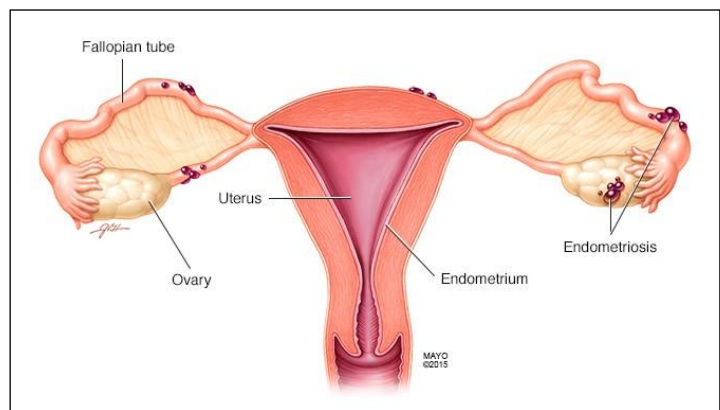
DEEP INFILTRATING ENDOMETRIOSIS SCAN

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis is a condition the specialised tissue lining of the uterine cavity can exist outside of the pelvis and uterus. The endometriotic tissue responds to the cycle of hormones in the same way that the uterine lining does, growing and bleeding each month. The small amounts of internal bleeding which occur during a period result in inflammation, pain and scarring. Over time collections of blood can build up in or around organs and the organs can become stuck together .

Locations of endometriosis includes the

- Overlying pelvic organs
- The side walls of the pelvis
- Behind or within the ovaries
- Bladder
- Vaginal
- Bowel walls



As the scarring develops, the walls begin to fold in as blood collections develop. This is called Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis. Women with endometriosis in these locations may experience pain with bowel movements or blood in the stools or urine during menstruation.

Transvaginal ultrasound can be used to help locate Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis and guide the managing doctor in providing advice about the most appropriate forms of treatment and possible complications.

However, as the bowel is filled with the forming stool and gas, both of which hamper ultrasound views, preparation is recommended.

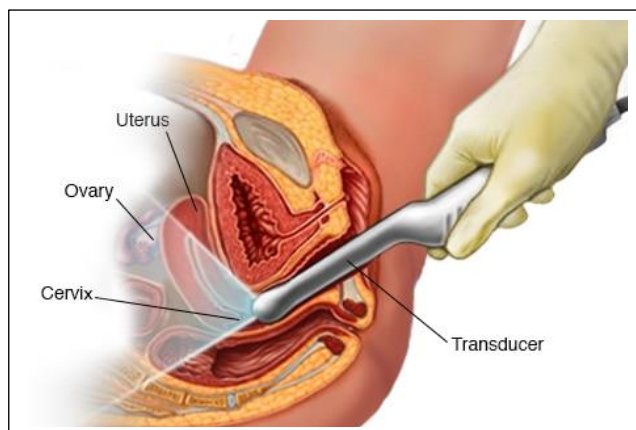
Preparation for an ultrasound assessing for Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis?

The lower bowel needs to be empty. This is achieved with laxatives and enemas which can be purchased over-the-counter at your local pharmacy.

The day before your examination, aim to avoid high fibre foods (eg. fruits, vegetables, high fibre cereals and wholemeal/wholegrain breads). Drink extra fluids throughout the afternoon. Consider having a soup meal that evening. You can eat as usual the next morning.

Before going to bed, take 2 tablets of a laxative (Dulcolax or Coloxyl is a suitable example). Drink an extra glass or 2 of water. Be prepared for the possibility of a visit to the toilet in the night or early morning. If the laxative tablets have not been effective in the morning (and particularly if you suffer constipation) use a self-administered enema (FLEET enema). After insertion into the rectum it should be held for 5 minutes if possible. It is usually effective soon after this.

The result from the laxatives usually leaves the bowel suitably empty for a few hours. Thus it is ok to use them well before a scheduled appointment, to avoid the risk of needing a toilet urgently when you are travelling to the appointment.



Is the Ultrasound Examination painful?

Many women with severe endometriosis do experience more discomfort or pain with transvaginal scanning. For this reason, you may like to consider taking a couple of pain-relief tablets before you come. Options are an anti-inflammatory, such as Neurofen or Naprogesic, or paracetamol (with or without codeine) such as Panadol or Panadeine.

What is the best time in your cycle for the ultrasound?

The best time is in the 2 weeks leading up to your period.