



University Hospitals Bristol  
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information service  
Bristol Royal Hospital for Children

# What is a fetal heart scan?



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A fetal heart scan is an ultrasound examination of your baby's heart and is normally performed between 18 and 21 weeks. Your scan will take place within the specialist fetal cardiology department. It is not always clear what causes some congenital heart conditions. However, there are certain factors that may increase the risk of having a baby with a heart condition. These include:

1. you, your partner or your other children have a heart condition
2. you suffer from diabetes
3. you are currently on medication that may increase the risk of your baby having a heart condition
4. you had an abnormal screening scan.

## **Preparing for the scan**

Many people find it helpful to have someone with them during the scan, so you may want to consider bringing your partner, a relative or a friend along. Ideally, please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment to give the medical team plenty of time to explain the scan to you. You do not need a full bladder for your scan.

## **What will happen during the scan?**

The scan is similar to a normal ultrasound scan, except that it will concentrate on examining your baby's heart. As a guide, this will take around 20 to 30 minutes and looks at the cardiac anatomy in greater detail than your routine anomaly scan.

We do not assess any other features of the baby's anatomy and therefore we are unable to comment on the sex of the baby. At the end of the appointment one of the fetal cardiology team will discuss the results of the scan and if any further follow-up is needed.

## Finding out more

If your baby has a heart condition, the consultant fetal cardiologist will explain to you:

- the precise nature of the heart condition
- the likely treatment that may be needed after birth
- the general prognosis and long term outlook
- the options available to you and their implications for your pregnancy.

There will be time to ask questions to clarify anything that may not have been understood during the discussion. Do not worry if you think of more questions after your appointment – you will be given contact details for the fetal cardiology service.

## Useful websites

Further information can be found on the University Hospital Bristol website ([www.uhbristol.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk)). Other sites which you may find useful are:

Antenatal Results and Choices:	<a href="http://www.arc-uk.org">www.arc-uk.org</a>
British Heart Foundation :	<a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a>
South West Children's Heart Circle:	<a href="http://www.heartcircle.org">www.heartcircle.org</a>

## Fetal cardiology team contact

<b>Fetal cardiology consultant</b>	Dr P Caldas
<b>Specialist fetal cardiac sonographers</b>	Angela Hobbs Jo Jones
<b>Administrator:</b>	0117 342 5394
<b>Cardiac nurse specialists</b>	0117 342 8578 / 0117 342 8286

If you have any questions regarding your appointment, please contact the team.

Please note that if for any reason you would value a second opinion concerning your diagnosis or treatment, you are entirely within your rights to request this.

The first step would usually be to discuss this with the doctor or other lead clinician who is responsible for your care.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death. For support in stopping smoking contact **Smokefree Bristol** on **0117 922 2255**.

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research. This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While your child is under our care, you may be approached about them taking part in research. To find out more please visit: **[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/research-innovation)** or call the research and innovation team on **0117 342 0233**.

For access to other patient leaflets and information please go to the following address:

**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/)**

**Hospital switchboard: 0117 923 0000**



**Minicom: 0117 934 9869**



**[www.uhbristol.nhs.uk](http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk)**



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email [patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk](mailto:patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk).

