

#### Can every defect of the fetus be seen?

No, a normal ultrasound examination is not a guarantee of a normal fetus. Unfortunately there are still many problems that cannot be seen. We cannot see chromosome abnormalities, such as Down syndrome, but we may see changes that indicate a higher likelihood of a chromosome abnormality. If you do not want to know about these, please tell the sonographer.

#### Is it safe?

Diagnostic ultrasound has been in use since the late 1950's. To date the results of numerous follow-up studies on patients and children who had been examined before birth have failed to demonstrate any biological effect that could be attributed to the ultrasound examination.

Fetal heart >



SYDNEY ULTRASOUND *for* WOMEN



## The 18-20 Week Ultrasound Examination

SYDNEY ULTRASOUND *for* WOMEN



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## The 18-20 Week Ultrasound Examination

Ultrasound is the use of high frequency sound waves to create an image. Ultrasound is often considered part of the routine obstetric care for all pregnant women.



Fetal hand 'waving' >

## What is the purpose of this examination ?

To assess:

- the number of babies in the uterus
- the age of the baby
- the baby's physical development
- the position of the placenta
- the amount of amniotic fluid around the baby

## Why at 18-20 weeks ?

Good detail can usually be obtained at this time, allowing a more complete physical assessment.

## Do I need a full bladder ?

It is useful to have some fluid in the bladder to allow better visualisation of the fetus by keeping the uterus above the pelvic bones. This can be achieved without the bladder being so full as to be uncomfortable. For this reason, please do not empty your bladder just before the examination.

## Can I bring a video ?

Yes, a video (VHS) of the examination can be recorded. We are happy to provide a ten minute tape for \$11, the proceeds of which go to charity (usually Austcare). Alternatively, we can supply still images of the ultrasound on a floppy disc or email them to a patient.

## Fetal profile >



It's a boy! >

## Can everything be seen at the one examination ?

Usually it can, but sometimes the age of the fetus or its position or the build of the mother may mean that a repeat examination is necessary.

## Can I find out the sex of my baby ?

Often the sex of the baby can be identified but in some cases the fetal position can prevent this. Some parents are keen to discover the sex of the baby while others are not. If you want to know the sex, please let the person performing your ultrasound know.