

Information for radiologists on community-based maternity ultrasounds at Alert Levels 3 and 4

16 September 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in community settings and protecting both pregnant women and their community-based sonographers, radiologists and ancillary staff.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with information available at health.govt.nz/covid-19

Symptoms and how COVID-19 is spread

COVID-19 presents with one or more of the following:

- a new or worsening cough
- fever (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath
- a sore throat
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19. If you have these symptoms, please telephone Healthline (for free) on **0800 358 5453** or your doctor. More information can be found on the Ministry of Health website health.govt.nz/covid-19.

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

Basic hygiene measures are the most important way to stop the spread of infections, including COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people suffering from any acute respiratory infection.
- Wash and dry hands (or use hand sanitiser) frequently, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment (**hand hygiene**).
- Keep your hands away from your face (eyes, nose and mouth).
- Everyone should practice cough and sneeze etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with elbow, disposable tissues or clothing and wash and dry hands).

Community-based maternity ultrasound during the period of COVID-19 pandemic

This advice aims to maintain maternity ultrasound services while minimising risk to community sonographers, other staff and the public.

Regarding individuals who have confirmed or probable COVID-19, or who are in self-isolation or quarantine because they are a close contact, or who have recently arrived from overseas: all non-urgent maternity imaging must be deferred until they have been cleared. Any urgent imaging required for these individuals must only be performed in centres with adequate PPE and training.

Staggered appointments can reduce exposure and the number of women in the waiting room. All women are to arrive and be scanned alone, except when an associate is required as translator or in procedures with a high risk of pregnancy loss, or other significant finding such as threatened miscarriage or suspected ectopic. In those instances, a single support person is allowed. All other family or support persons should not enter the practice.

Specific guidance

During this period there will be no social scanning, for example, 3D face imaging or more than a single attempt at gender assessment.

Abnormal findings are to be referred as usual.

The sonographer may reserve the right to terminate the scan if they are uncomfortable with the patient behaviour or undeclared symptoms such as coughing.

Where possible, limit each sonographer to working at a single site.

Critical components of the scan should not be compromised in the interests of reducing time.

Use of cine loops and minimalist labelling are recommended to assist in reducing scan time.

Reports performed under the above conditions should be labelled as "Performed with restrictions imposed by COVID-19".

The list of clinical indications for maternity ultrasound scans can be found here: **clinical indications**.

First trimester 11 weeks -13 weeks+6 days scans

- Early anatomy assessment of major structures is still required.
- If the first trimester scan is unable to be completed, ensure the referrer is informed so that the MSS2 can be offered.

Anatomy scans

- Avoid recall for incomplete anatomy except where major structures are not visualised.

Early pregnancy dating or viability scans

- Dating and viability scans are not indicated in an otherwise normal early pregnancy.
- Decline all requests without adequate indication.
- Maternal concern alone is not sufficient indication.
- Considering termination of pregnancy is an indication.

Growth scans

- Growth scans are not indicated in an otherwise normal pregnancy.
- Decline all requests without adequate indication.
- Maternal concern alone is not sufficient indication.
- 30-minute biophysical profile should not be performed without specialist request.

Infection control procedures

Full infection control procedures are outside the scope of this document (**see information on the health professionals page for more detailed information**) however a sample protocol for ultrasound equipment cleaning is included below. This is a sample only and can be superseded as information evolves or replaced by local practice.

Sonographers, please note that we recommend use of gloves and that you change your scrubs or uniform daily. Use of PPE will depend on availability and local protocol. Please see the information on **the use of PPE** for those providing close contact essential services.

Example of cleaning protocol (from National Women's Ultrasound):

1. All non-essential transducers are to be removed from the machines and stored on a transducer rack and covered or stored in a transducer box.
2. Every machine, and transducer on the machine, is to be fully cleaned with the Sanicloth at the start of every day, at midday and again at the completion of the day.
3. Between patients, any transducer used during a scan is to be cleaned with a Sanicloth including cable and the keyboard and front of machine is to be wiped down with Sanicloth.
4. Preferentially place transducers necessary for an examination but not in use on the leftward side of the machine.
5. Liberal use of the Trophon for high level disinfection.
6. All keyboards and bench surfaces within the U/S offices are to be wiped down at the start of the day, midday and again at the end of the day at a minimum.
7. Clean door handle if door was closed for privacy.

More information

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to [health.govt.nz/covid-19](https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19).

Call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have concerns about your own health, speak to a doctor.