



What is a 18-20 Week Morphology Scan?

The 18-20 Week Morphology Scan (sometimes called an anomaly scan) is a routine examination which most Australian women have in the mid trimester of their pregnancy. At Exact Radiology Clinics we recommend that the scan be performed after 19 weeks as this allows for a better assessment of the baby. The scan involves a Sonographer applying gel to your lower abdomen and moving a transducer (probe) over the skin to obtain images of the baby. A morphology scan is used to assess the foetal anatomy (morphology), early foetal growth, placental position and amniotic fluid volume.

Why have a Morphology Scan?

Along with measuring the baby's head, abdomen and limb length, the main purpose of the scan is to evaluate the foetal anatomy including the brain, face, spine, heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys, bladder, cord insertion, arms, legs, placenta, cervix and volume of amniotic fluid. Occasionally it enables the detection of foetal anomalies and structural problems. However it is important to understand that although it is possible to identify a range of abnormalities with this scan it is not a perfect test. In other words a normal ultrasound result does not guarantee a normal baby. This is partly due to the size and development of the baby and partly because of the limitations of the technology. Ultrasound cannot be used to diagnose chromosome problems such as Down Syndrome, although sometimes it can provide us with signs that indicate a higher risk for these problems. Neither can it be used to diagnose blindness, deafness, cerebral palsy or autism. Often heart defects can only be detected later in the pregnancy and many problems such as bone disorders are only able to be diagnosed after the birth of the baby through further examination. Often the baby's sex can be determined depending on its position although this is not 100% accurate. If you wish to know the sex of your baby please inform the Sonographer at the beginning of your scan.

Who does my Morphology Scan and report?

The person who operates the scanning equipment is a Sonographer. They are university- trained and accredited with the Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR). The person who views and interprets the ultrasound images is a doctor specialising in Radiology, known as a Radiologist. The Radiologist prepares a report for your Health Care Professional.

How do I prepare for my Morphology Scan?

The preparation requirements for this scan will be explained to you by our friendly staff when you make your appointment.

Things to bring along to my appointment:

- Previous films of your pregnancy.
- Medicare or Department of Veteran Affairs card (as we bulk bill all eligible Medicare services).
- Referral (this is a legal requirement).

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