



WHAT IS THE 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 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 (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. In certain cases, 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 at this scan it is not a perfect test. This is partly because 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.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY MORPHOLOGY SCAN?

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

Please notify the booking staff if you are aware that you have a multiple pregnancy or of any special conditions of your pregnancy. If you require an urgent appointment please request your doctor to call.

WHO CAN ATTEND THE EXAMINATION?

It is important to understand that this is a clinical scan to evaluate the wellbeing and progress of your baby. For the sonographer to perform the best possible examination high levels of concentration are required to acquire images and measurements from the scan to ensure your results are based on the best possible information. This examination can take more than 30 minutes and it is our policy that small children are not permitted in the room. Children over 5 who are accompanied by another adult may attend for some part of the examination.

If you would like a 30 minute scan to share with family of your baby in 3D/4D, we offer this service at our Ipswich and Rochedale clinics. It is not covered by Medicare. Please refer to 3D/4D Ultrasound Fact Sheet for details.

WHO PERFORMS MY MORPHOLOGY SCAN AND REPORTS THE RESULTS TO MY DOCTOR?

A university trained Sonographer will perform the scan and a Radiologist (specialist doctor) will view the images and provide a report to your doctor. All Exact Radiologists and technical staff are required to undertake ongoing training and development in order to remain registered to perform these examinations.

THINGS TO BRING ALONG TO YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Previous scans from this pregnancy.
- Doctor's referral (this is a legal requirement).

FEES

Exact Radiology Clinics bulk bill most Medicare eligible services, however some examination incur a fee. Our booking staff will advise you when you phone to make your appointment. If a fee applies, payment is requested on the day of the examination.