Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language or audio, please contact Interpreting services on telephone: 01223348043, or email: interpreting@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

For Large Print information please contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

We are a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

How to comment on your care
We always aim to provide the best possible service, and staff will be happy to answer your questions. However, you can also contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) with any compliments or concerns by telephone 01223 216756 or email pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Contacts/further information
If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Vascular Studies Unit (VSU) on telephone: 01223 348117.

Vascular Studies Unit
Patient Information
An ultrasound scan of your leg veins
What is an ultrasound scan of your veins?
An ultrasound scan of your veins may also be called a duplex or Doppler of your veins. This test uses ultrasound to produce images of the veins in your legs. The veins carry blood from the extremities back to the heart and they have valves to help control flow in the right direction.

This test is a safe and effective way to assess if the valves in the veins are working properly. If the veins are not working properly, the ultrasound scan can map out the problem veins enabling the consultant to plan your treatment.

The test is painless and does not use any radiation or needles.

Where do I go?
The Vascular Studies Unit (VSU) is on level 5 of the Addenbrooke’s Treatment Centre (ATC).

Please inform reception of your arrival straight away. There are often other clinics in progress so you may not be called in order of arrival.

You may bring a relative or friend in with you during the test or request a chaperone if you would like one.

What is consent?
Before your test is performed you must give your consent or permission. Consent is the process by which you give permission to health professionals to provide your care and treatment. It may be implied (offering your arm for a blood pressure reading) or formal (signing a formal consent form for an operation). In either case your consent must be given voluntarily and you must have all the information you need to make a decision. If you feel you do not have enough information or do not understand the procedure please ask.

How is an ultrasound scan of your veins performed?
There is no preparation required and you may eat and drink as usual prior to the test.

A clinical vascular scientist (who might be male or female) will perform and interpret your ultrasound scan. You will be asked to remove your shoes, socks and trousers or skirt. The lights will be dimmed to allow the best images to be obtained.

If possible the scan will be performed with you standing or sat on the edge of the couch with your legs hanging down. Gel is applied to your leg and the scan is carried out from the groin down to the ankle. The scientist will gently squeeze your calf to control the blood flow, whilst moving the ultrasound probe up and down your leg to view the veins. The investigation takes approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

During the test, you may hear some “swooshing” noises from the ultrasound machine. These sounds are normal.

Risks/Side Effects
Some people experience dizziness or feel faint during the examination. This is a normal response and can be relieved by lying flat. Please inform the scientist if you experience these symptoms during your visit.

What happens next?
The clinical vascular scientist can comment briefly on the findings and will write a report for the consultant who requested the test. You will be able to discuss the results of this investigation fully with the referring team at your next outpatient appointment.

In rare cases, the clinical vascular scientist may need to discuss the result with a doctor before you leave.