

The morphology scan, also known as the 20 week (2nd trimester) anatomy or anomaly scan, is recommended as part of routine antenatal care. The scan is ideally done at 19–21 weeks of pregnancy, when your baby's growth and development can be seen more clearly.

This comprehensive ultrasound takes approximately 60 minutes and examines;

- The size of your baby.
- Baby's anatomy, including a detailed assessment of the head, brain, face, lips, heart, stomach, lungs, abdominal wall, kidneys, bladder, spine, arms, legs, hands and feet.
- The position of your placenta in your uterus, ensuring it is not too close to the cervix.
- The length of your cervix, which can help in the assessment and prevention of preterm birth.
- The volume of fluid surrounding your baby.
- +/- your baby's sex (if you would like to know).
- Maternal organs like kidneys and sometimes ovaries.

Most morphology scans show normal findings, but occasionally an abnormality is identified. If this occurs, your GP will discuss this with you and arrange appropriate counselling and follow up.

It is important to note that not all abnormalities can be detected by ultrasound. Some conditions may only become evident later in pregnancy or may not cause structural changes, such as cerebral palsy, metabolic conditions, some chromosomal abnormalities, or minor heart abnormalities.

Sometimes your baby's position or movement can limit the sonographer's view at the time of your ultrasound. In these circumstances, you may be asked to rebook for further assessment.

Morphology scans are usually performed transabdominally, but there are some circumstances where an internal/transvaginal ultrasound may be recommended to you. This involves your consent to insert a thin ultrasound probe into your vagina to get a better view of some structures, in particular your cervix and placental edge. A transvaginal scan is your choice, it is your decision whether you choose to consent or decline this aspect of the morphology scan. Both transabdominal and transvaginal ultrasounds are safe in pregnancy.