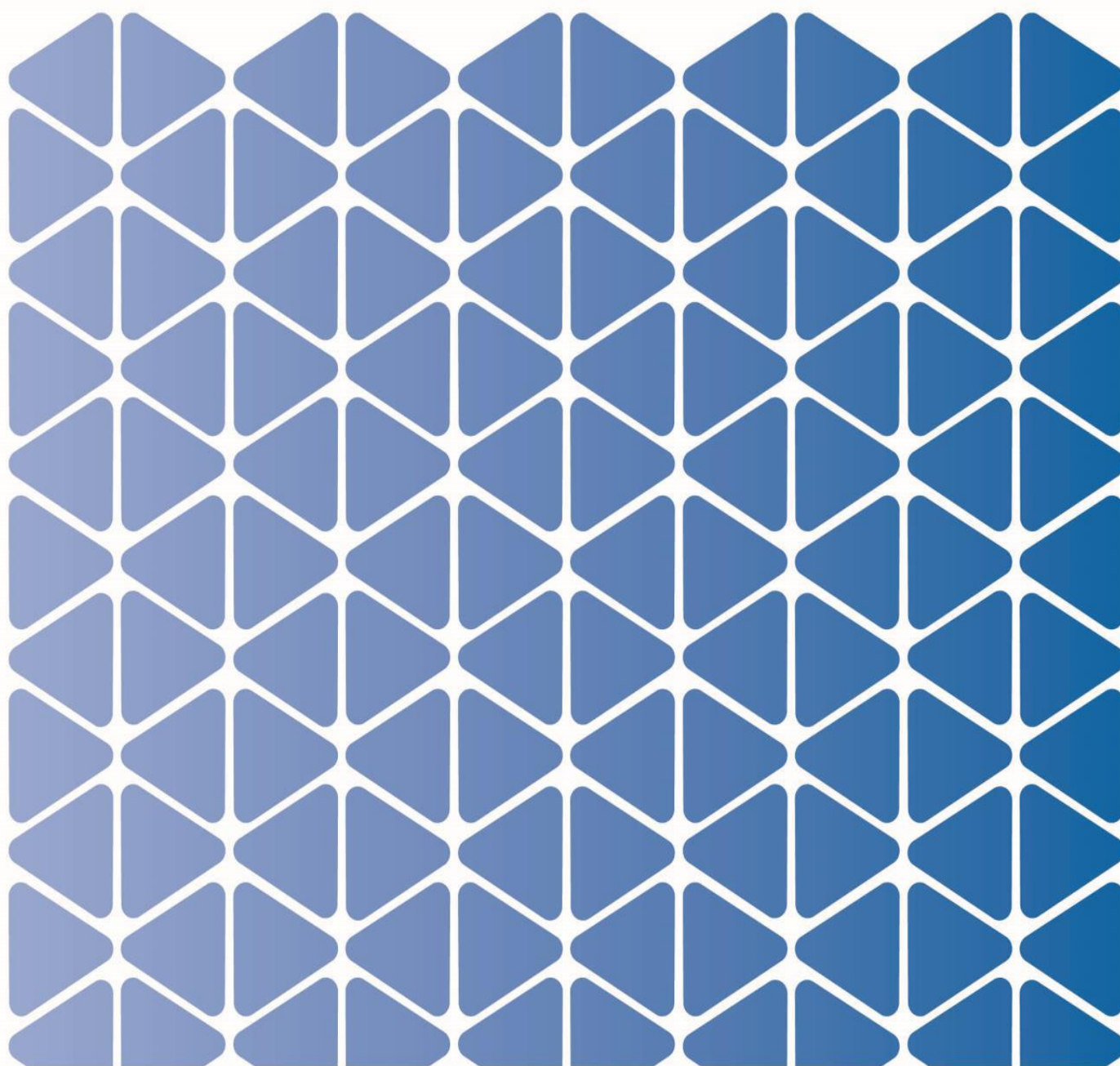


PATIENT INFORMATION

# CRANIAL ULTRASOUND





### What is a cranial ultrasound?

A cranial ultrasound, also known as a head scan, is a safe, non-invasive test. The ultrasound machine is similar to those used in antenatal scanning. The probe is placed on the baby's soft spot (fontanelle) found on the top of their head. As the probe is moved, the ultrasound machine converts sound waves (not radiation/X-Ray) into images to be analysed. These black and white images allow us to look at the brain structure and the fluid filled spaces within the brain (ventricles) and the brain tissue surrounding the ventricles.

### Why does my baby need a cranial ultrasound?

Cranial ultrasounds are performed routinely on all preterm babies born at less than 33 weeks gestation to look for problems of prematurity. These may include structural problems or bleeds within the ventricles or the brain tissue. Cranial ultrasounds may also be needed on babies born greater than 33 weeks if the medical team feel this would be helpful in assessing your baby. This will be discussed with you by the medical team. The routine timing of cranial ultrasounds can be seen in the table below. Staff will discuss with you if more frequent scans are required. Dates may vary dependent on staff and scanner availability.

<b>Estimated Timing of Cranial Ultrasounds (scanning dates and frequency may vary)</b>					
Gestation at Birth	0-3 days of life	3 -7 days of life	6–10 days of life	14 -16 days of life	36 weeks or pre-discharge
< 30 weeks	<b>x</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>x</b>
30-32 weeks		<b>x</b>			<b>x</b>
>33 weeks	Cranial Ultrasound performed as needed				

### **How is a cranial ultrasound performed?**

The cranial ultrasound can usually be completed without moving your baby from their incubator or cot. If your baby is on the Transitional Care Unit they may be taken to a darker bay on the unit so that the images on the ultrasound can be viewed more easily. Your baby will be positioned to lie on their back. Clear water-based lubricant is applied to the probe which is moved across the soft spot (fontanelle) on top of the baby's head. A cranial ultrasound will usually take no more than 30 minutes to complete. There is no risk involved with the procedure.

Cranial Ultrasound isn't a painful procedure, however your baby may feel a slight pressure on the head as the probe is moved, the gel may initially feel a bit cold and wet. Feeds should not be withheld beforehand as it's helpful for your baby to be still during the scan so that clear images can be captured. Expressed breast milk or sucrose, wrapping and other comfort techniques may be used to help keep your baby settled during the scan. Parents are encouraged to be present during the scan and can provide comfort to their baby through still touching. If you would like to be present, please let a member of staff know so the timing of the scan can be arranged.

### **Results**

A Consultant, Registrar or ANNP (Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner) will interpret the ultrasound results and will then discuss the results with you. If the test results appear abnormal, your doctor may order further tests. The results from each scan are documented in your baby's medical notes and on their discharge paperwork. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to the doctors or nursing staff.

**If your baby's symptoms or condition worsens at home, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.