

# 20-week pregnancy check

## What has happened before my 20-week pregnancy check?

Before your 20-week scan, your GP or health care clinic would have organised some blood tests and a scan to check your baby's risk of having a genetic abnormality. If your baby had a low chance, your next scan would be when you are between 18 and 20 weeks pregnant.

## What will happen when I'm 20 weeks pregnant?

When you are between 18 and 20 weeks pregnant, your GP or midwife will organise a scan with an ultrasound specialist. The ultrasound will be performed by placing a probe onto your belly and moving it around on top of some gel so they can get a good look at baby. In some cases, they may also put an internal scanner in your vagina to check the length of your cervix.

## Why am I doing this scan?

This scan checks your baby is growing well, is moving around correctly, and your placenta is sitting in a good spot in your womb. They can also use the ultrasound to check your baby's inside to make sure baby is growing well, and everything looks good.

## What do they look at in the scan?

The scan will look at lots of different parts of your growing baby's body, including:

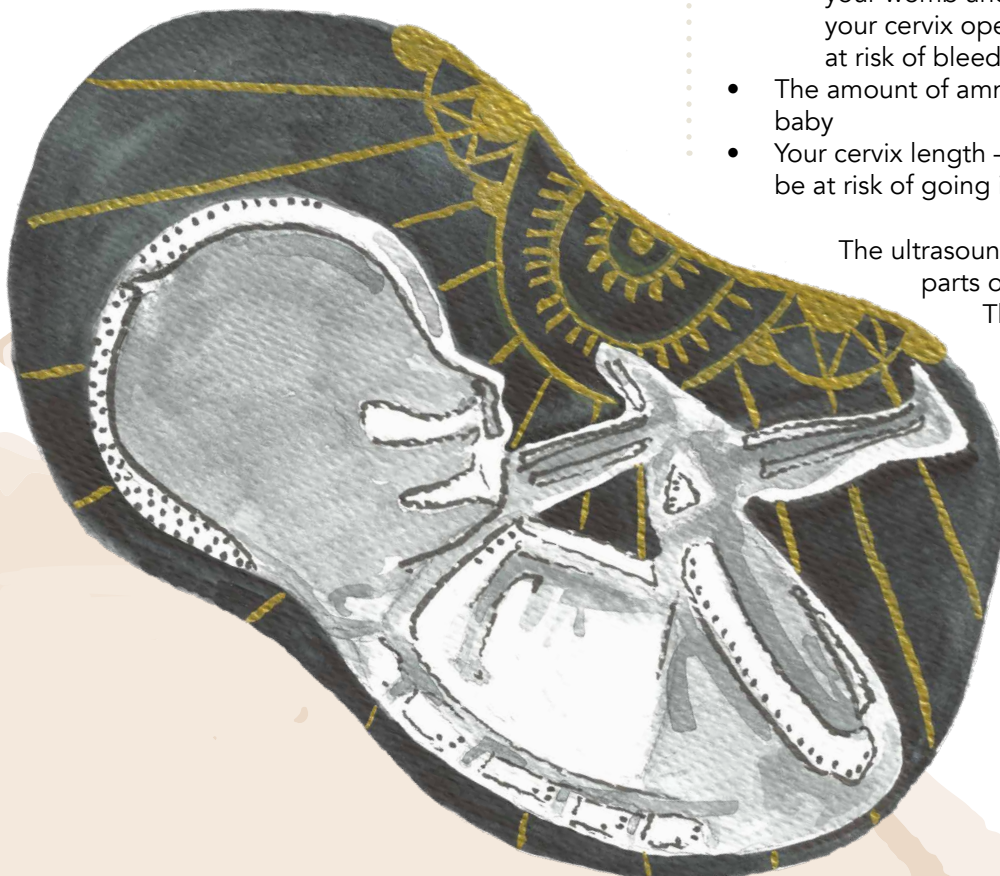
- Their heartbeat and heart structure
- The shape and structure of their head and brain
- Their face – checking its structure and looking at the nose and mouth for a cleft lip
- Their belly – checking the belly wall covers all of the inside organs
- Their kidneys – checking your baby has two kidneys and wee moves from their kidney to their bladder
- Their arms, legs, hands, and feet to check their length and the number of fingers and toes.

They will also check:

- Your placenta
  - They will look where your placenta is sitting in your womb and check it is not over or close to your cervix opening. Otherwise, you could be at risk of bleeding during labour.
- The amount of amniotic fluid surrounding your baby
- Your cervix length – if your cervix is short, you may be at risk of going into early labour.

The ultrasound specialist will also measure parts of your baby's growing body. These measurements help tell when baby is due.

The ultrasound can also show if your baby is in a good position, they can tell you your baby's gender if you would like to know.





### **Why would they repeat a scan?**

Around 15% of scans need to be repeated at another time. Most of the time, this is because the baby is not lying in a good position for the ultrasound specialist to see the things they need. It can also be difficult to see certain parts of the baby if you have a heavier build.

If they couldn't see everything they needed, they will ask you to come back in 1-2 weeks for a repeat scan. If the specialist thinks there may be a problem, they might talk to their supervisor for advice. They will also call your doctor or midwife and give them a specialised report of their results.

Your doctor or midwife will sit down with you very soon after the scan and explain the findings. They will answer your questions and organise any specialist appointments that are necessary for you and your baby.

### **What's next?**

If your scan was normal and your baby looks well, this will be the last scan of your pregnancy. The next test due at 28 weeks is your oral glucose test to check for gestational diabetes.

If there were an abnormality or concern on your scan, your GP or midwife would organise an appointment with a specialised doctor called a foetal medicine specialist who will do special investigations to look after you and your baby for the rest of your pregnancy.



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