

## Finding out about your baby

Congratulations on your pregnancy!

This is an exciting time for you, and you will want to know everything you can about your baby and how it is growing.

Some women have an ultrasound scan at around six weeks, to try to pinpoint the date their baby is due. However health professionals no longer recommend you have this ultrasound, unless there is a problem with your pregnancy or health.

Having a scan in the first trimester can give you a slightly more accurate due date than a second trimester scan does, but it provides very little other information and can lead to further unnecessary investigation and anxiety. This is why it makes more sense to wait for your scan at 11 to 13 weeks (this is called a nuchal translucency scan).

The scan you have at 18 to 20 weeks (which is called an anatomy scan) will also give information about when your baby is due. It will also give you a more complete picture of your baby's overall health and wellbeing.

In the meantime, we can estimate the date your baby is due by using the date of your last menstrual period (you may see this abbreviated to LMP). This has no risk for you or your baby.

Having an early scan doesn't make your pregnancy any safer, and only around 4% of women give birth on their due date anyway!\* So none of these scans are all that good at telling you exactly when your baby is due.

The recommendation against having a scan at six weeks is part of an overall trend away from unnecessary tests. These tests are of little or no value in terms of a person's healthcare, and may actually do some harm.

New Zealand has now joined an international campaign called Choosing Wisely, which encourages everyone to think about what tests aren't really necessary. It recommends the best most modern practice for healthcare – and often that means not having some tests or treatment. You can read more about Choosing Wisely online at <http://choosingwisely.org.nz/>

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\*"Prenatal assessment of gestational age and estimated date of delivery" by A P MacKenzie,MD, C D Stephenson,MD and E F Funai, MD. 2016. [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)