

What Is Ultrasound?

Ultrasound is a test that uses sound waves to produce images of organs inside your body. No e-rays or radiation is used in this test.

A device that looks like a microphone is moved lightly over your skin. This device is called a transducer. It sends sound waves into your body. The sound waves bounce off an organ like an echo. The "echo" is sent to a machine that records the results on film and on a computer.

WHAT CAN ULTRASOUND SHOW?

Ultrasound can give your doctor information that may help in your diagnosis and treatment. Most soft tissue organs can be studied with ultrasound. For instance, the gallbladder may be checked for gallstones. The kidneys, liver, and pancreas can be studied for tumors or cysts. Blood vessels can be checked for swelling or blockage.

Ultrasound also is used to evaluate pregnancy. We can see the growth, position, and number of babies in the mother's womb (uterus).

HOW DO I GET READY FOR MY ULTRASOUND EXAMINATION?

- If you are having an **ABDOMINAL** ultrasound, you should not eat or drink (this includes water) after midnight before the study
- Women having a **PELVIC** ultrasound will usually have a **TRANSVAGINAL** ultrasound. With this exam, a special condom-covered probe is gently put into the vagina. This helps show better images of the uterus and ovaries.

You may want to bring something to read or handwork to do while you wait.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE ULTRASOUND ROOM?

- The ultrasound staff will explain more about your exam.
- You will wear a hospital gown.
- You will be helped onto a padded table.
- You will lie on your back, side, or stomach depending on the organ(s) to be studied.
- Gel will be put on your skin in the area to be studied. This prevents air from getting between the transducer and your skin. The transducer will be moved around in the gel to produce images. You will not hear or feel the special sound waves.
- You will be asked to remain as still as you can and to hold your breath when pictures are taken.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER MY ULTRASOUND EXAMINATION?

As soon as the test is finished, you will be helped to the bathroom if needed. You can return to your normal routines and diet.

HOW LONG DOES THE EXAM TAKE?

Your visit will take about one hour. This includes waiting time. You may have to wait a few minutes during your study while images are being checked. We want to make sure we get good images.

The information in this publication is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her advice and instructions.

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By the Department of Radiology

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