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- ★ Locations offering ultrasound

Ultrasound

Understanding your exam



OCT 2023

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What is ultrasound?

Ultrasound imaging (sonography) uses high-frequency sound waves to view structures within the body such as internal organs. Because ultrasound images are captured in real-time, they can show movement of the body's internal organs as well as blood flowing through blood vessels. Ultrasound is an examination with no known risks and minimal discomfort.

Ultrasound is used for a wide variety of reasons, including to:

- evaluate a fetus
- diagnose abdominal pain or distention
- examine an enlarged abdominal organ
- find stones in the gallbladder or kidney
- assess or diagnose an abdominal aortic aneurysm
- look for tumors and congenital malformation
- look for blockages to blood flow, such as clots
- guide a needle for biopsy or tumor treatment
- assess a breast lump

How does ultrasound work?

In an ultrasound exam, a hand-held transducer is placed against the skin. A water-based gel is applied to the skin to ensure complete contact with the surface. The transducer sends out high frequency sound waves that reflect off body structures and the returning sound waves, or echoes, are displayed as an image on a monitor. The image is based on frequency and strength (amplitude) of the sound signal and the time it takes to return from the patient to the transducer.

How do I prepare for the exam?

Preparation for an ultrasound depends on the type of exam you are having. Many ultrasound exams require no preparation. Other exams require that you do not eat or drink for a specified period of time before the exam. Some require that you drink a specific amount of water before the exam because a full bladder can provide better visualization of some organs.

You should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing for your exam. You may need to remove clothing and jewelry in the area to be examined in which case you will be given a gown. Most ultrasound exams take from 15 to 45 minutes.



What can I expect?

During the exam, you will usually lie on an examination table. A small amount of gel will be applied to the area of the examination and the technologist will press a small hand-held device called a transducer against your skin and move it from one area to another until the required images have been gathered.

A great majority of ultrasound exams are completely noninvasive and at most you may experience mild discomfort as the transducer is passed over your body, especially if you need to have a full bladder. In order to get the best possible picture, a few exams, such as prostate and uterine exams, are done inside the body using a transducer attached to a wand that is inserted into the rectum or vagina.

Ultrasound imaging has been used for many years and has an excellent safety record; there are no known risks from a diagnostic ultrasound exam. Also, you will be able to return to your normal activities immediately after most exams.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist, a physician specifically trained to supervise and interpret radiology examinations, will analyze the images and send the report to your physician. Your physician will share the results with you.

To schedule an ultrasound exam or
for further questions, please visit
www.ausrad.com or call (512) 453-6100.