

Ultrasound

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves to create images of the inside of the body. There is no radiation used, so it is safe for pregnant women and children. Pictures are obtained by placing gel on the skin and moving an ultrasound transducer (fancy microphone) over the area of interest. The exam is usually painless.

Fetal or **obstetrical** ultrasound is most often used to evaluate the size and age of a fetus as well as assess the growth during pregnancy. It can also be used to screen for certain abnormalities of the fetal anatomy.

Abdominal ultrasound assesses the gallbladder, liver, spleen, pancreas and kidneys. Size and shape of the organs are usually easily recognized. Abnormalities, such as gall stones or kidney cysts can be identified using ultrasound.

Pelvic ultrasound is used to evaluate the uterus and ovaries. This study includes an endovaginal exam, which is performed using a specially shaped transducer covered by a sterile sheath that the patient is asked to place into her vagina. This method provides a very detailed look at the uterus and ovaries. In men, pelvic ultrasound can be utilized to image the prostate gland. The overall size and shape of the gland can be estimated. Prostate nodules can be imaged using an endorectal approach.

Thyroid ultrasound assesses the size of the thyroid lobes. Thyroid lesions and/or nodules can be characterized for their make-up and location.

Arteries and veins are assessed using **vascular** ultrasound. Pulsed Doppler and color flow Doppler are used in addition to standard ultrasound imaging. Veins (usually leg veins) can be evaluated for thrombosis (blood clot) and arteries can be scanned to determine if there is any narrowing of the vessel due to atherosclerosis, usually in the carotid arteries of the neck. Vascular ultrasound can also be used to evaluate the abdominal blood vessels.



PREPARATION:

Pelvic and **Obstetrical** (up to 20 weeks)

Drink 4 (8 oz.) glasses of any liquid one hour before your appointment. Be sure to eat. Do not empty your bladder. Obstetrical patients (20 weeks to term) drink 1 (8 oz.) glass only.

Abdominal (Gallbladder, Liver, Pancreas, RUQ, Spleen)

DO NOT eat or drink after midnight before your exam.

