

## **What is Diagnostic Ultrasound (Sonogram)?**

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An Ultrasound machine uses high frequency sound waves to create pictures of a variety of body structures including the internal organs of the abdomen and pelvis, the arteries and veins, and the pregnant uterus and its gestation. Ultrasound is not usually used to assess bones or the intestines. Unlike x-rays and CT scans, ultrasound does not use radiation and therefore may be used safely during pregnancy.

### **Are there any contraindications to having an ultrasound test (sonogram)?**

Ultrasound is non-invasive and does not use contrast medium (dye) or radiation. There are no known adverse effects of diagnostic ultrasound. Pacemakers, hearing aids, and metal in the body do not interfere with ultrasound imaging.

### **How do I prepare for Ultrasound exam?**

Most exams have no preparation. Certain ultrasound exams require some preparation such as fasting (not eating prior to the test as ordered by your doctor) or having a full urinary bladder. If you must have a full bladder, you will be asked to drink a certain number of glasses of water prior to the test.



Source: [www.chadwickmedical.com](http://www.chadwickmedical.com)

### **How is an Ultrasound exam performed?**

- You will be asked to lie on a bed or stretcher next to the machine.
- The sonographer (ultrasound technologist) will apply some clear water-based gel to the area of the body to be scanned. Without this gel, the small amount of air between the transducer (probe) and the skin would interfere with imaging.
- The sonographer will then scan over the body part with a hand held probe (transducer) similar in size and shape to a microphone.
- Sound waves are generated which are above the range of human hearing. The machine actually detects high frequency echoes coming back from the body, and a computer uses these to generate an image of the organ being scanned.
- These sound waves are not felt by the patient.
- The time to complete the study varies depending on the type of

exam. It usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes.

**Are there any follow up instructions after an Ultrasound exam?**

There are no special follow-up instructions after a standard ultrasound procedure. A formal report will be sent to your doctor within days following your procedure. Your doctor will speak with you regarding the results.

*Source:* American College of Radiology. Retrieved 04/2007 from. [www.radiologyinfo.org](http://www.radiologyinfo.org)

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