

What is an ultrasound?

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves ('ultrasound') to produce images of the body. No X-ray radiation is involved.

How is an ultrasound performed?

The Sonographer will place a 'transducer' onto your skin. This is a hand-held device attached to the scanner by a cord. A small amount of water-soluble gel is placed on your skin so that the transducer can move around freely. As the transducer moves over your skin, images are visible on a nearby screen. You may need to hold your breath to view certain body parts. There may be some pressure, however the scan is not painful. Please let the Sonographer know if you are experiencing any local discomfort. Parents may accompany children.

Are there any risks?

There are no known harmful effects of ultrasound.

Are there any limitations?

Ultrasound waves do not pass easily through bone and air. You may need additional tests such as an X-ray to view bones. Intestinal gas can limit views of deeper structures such as the pancreas.

Expectant mothers can have an ultrasound to view their baby. An ultrasound can show many details of the baby, but there are some abnormalities that *may not* be detected with this test. That is, *a normal ultrasound does not assure you of a normal baby.*

Preparation needed prior to the examination

For all scans, you should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes.

OBSTETRIC, PELVIS, KIDNEY OR BLADDER ULTRASOUNDS

You will need to have a full bladder. Please drink one litre of water one hour prior to the scan.

UPPER ABDOMEN ULTRASOUNDS

(liver, pancreas and gall bladder)

Do not eat or drink for six hours prior to the examination. Please do not smoke cigarettes during this time, as it can also effect the results of this test.

DOPPLER ULTRASOUND

(carotid arteries, or peripheral arteries or veins)

No preparation is required.

SOFT TISSUE AND MUSCULOSKELETAL ULTRASOUNDS

(such as neck or thyroid ultrasounds),

No preparation is required.