

How to Prepare for an Ultrasound

Ultrasound

An ultrasound uses sound waves to “see” the inside of your body. A computer monitor shows the images from the sound waves.

These images can provide information to help diagnose and treat a variety of diseases and conditions.

Ultrasound does not have any known side effects.

What to Expect

To capture the images, the sonographer (person giving the exam) will apply a small amount of ultrasound gel to your skin. He or she will move the ultrasound probe over the skin in the area of interest.

The gel will be removed at the end of the exam.

How to Prepare

The following information tells how to prepare for different types of ultrasounds.

Abdomen or Aorta (Heart Artery)

- It is recommended to schedule this exam in the morning because you will need to fast (go without any food or drink).
- Do not eat or drink anything 8 hours before the exam. This includes chewing gum and smoking.
 - It is OK to take your regular medicines as usual with a small sip of water.

Your Appointment

Date: _____

Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.

Length of appointment: _____

Arteries, Breast, Neck, Testicles Thyroid, Veins

- You do not need to prepare.

Kidney (Renal)

There is a 4-hour food and liquid restriction before having this type of ultrasound.

Please follow these instructions:

- Do not have anything to eat or drink for 3 hours before your appointment time.
 - It is OK to take your regular medicines as usual with a small sip of water.
- Finish drinking 28 to 32 ounces of water 1 hour before your appointment time to fill your bladder.
 - Do not urinate before the exam. A full bladder is needed to complete the exam.
- Example:
 - **11 a.m.:** Your appointment time.
 - **7 - 10 a.m.:** Do not have anything to eat or drink.
 - **10 - 11 a.m.:** Drink 28 to 32 ounces of water: (No other food or drink, including carbonated beverages.)

(over)

■ OB (for Pregnant Women)

□ If you are less than 14 weeks pregnant:

- You will need to finish drinking 28 to 32 ounces of water 1 hour before your exam so you have a full bladder. Do not urinate before the exam.
- You may have two parts to your exam:
 - **Transabdominal ultrasound:**
An ultrasound probe is placed on your abdomen. Using the warm gel and a full bladder, images of your pelvic organs will be taken. You will be asked to empty your bladder before the second part of the exam.
 - **Transvaginal ultrasound:**
An ultrasound probe is gently inserted into your vagina. Images will be taken of your baby and pelvic organs.

□ If you are more than 14 weeks pregnant:

- You do not need to prepare.

□ Pelvic, Bladder

- You will need to finish drinking 28 to 32 ounces of water 1 hour before your exam so you have a full bladder. Do not urinate before the exam.
- There will likely be two parts to your exam:
 - **Transabdominal ultrasound:**
An ultrasound probe is placed on your abdomen. Using the warm gel and a full bladder, images of your pelvic organs will be taken. You will be asked to empty your bladder before the second part of the exam.
 - **Transvaginal ultrasound:**
An ultrasound probe is gently inserted into your vagina. Images will be taken of your pelvic organs.

Other Information

- The sonographer cannot give the results of the exam.
- Visitors are limited in the ultrasound room. Children younger than age 5 must have an adult with them.

After the Ultrasound

- A radiologist will look at and interpret your ultrasound images.
- Your health care provider will receive the exam results. He or she will contact you about the results.