

What is an Abdominal Ultrasound?

An abdominal ultrasound (sonogram) uses reflected sound waves to produce images (pictures) of the abdomen (stomach) and internal organs. A sonographer performs an ultrasound examination. A transducer (a small, hand-held device that looks like a microphone) is placed over the area to be examined and records images electronically. Ultrasound images of the abdomen show organs like the gallbladder, spleen, pancreas, kidneys, liver and bile ducts as well as blood flow to the organs. Ultrasound does not use X-ray or other types of radiation.

How Do I Prepare for an Abdominal Ultrasound?

- **Do not to eat or drink for 6 hours before your ultrasound examination.**
Note: This means no water, coffee, chewing gum, or candy.
- Avoid smoking before the examination.
- Be sure to bring the referral form from your doctor and your insurance card with you to the appointment.

What Will I Experience During an Abdominal Ultrasound?

- Ultrasound imaging of the abdomen is painless, fast, and easy.
- You change into a gown for this test. The examination takes about 30 minutes.
- You are positioned on your back on a firm table in the Radiology department. Pillows are provided for your comfort.
- First, the sonographer applies a warm, clear gel on your abdomen to help the transducer make direct contact with the skin.
- Next, the sonographer places the transducer firmly against your skin, and moves it back and forth to see the images of your abdomen on the screen.

What Will I Experience During an Abdominal Ultrasound?

(continued)

- There may be mild discomfort from pressure as the sonographer moves the transducer over your abdomen, especially if you are having abdominal pain.
- After the exam, the sonographer reviews the ultrasound images with a radiologist.

What Can I Expect After an Abdominal Ultrasound Exam?

There are no restrictions on what you eat (your diet) or your activity, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

How Do I Get the Results?

A radiologist sends a signed report to your doctor. Be sure to tell the sonographer if you would like any other doctors to get a copy of the report. Your doctor's office tells you how to get your results.

More Ways to Learn

Go to www.cpmc.org/learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is an ultrasound?

Answer: An ultrasound is an examination that uses high-frequency sound waves to produce images (pictures) of your internal organs.

Question: How do I prepare for an abdominal ultrasound?

Answer: Do not eat or drink for 6 hours before your examination. This means no water, coffee, chewing gum, or candy.

Question: Is there any pain or discomfort with an abdominal ultrasound?

Answer: Ultrasound imaging is painless, fast and easy. There may be mild discomfort from pressure as the sonographer moves the transducer over your abdomen.

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Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).