

What is Ultrasound Imaging of the Musculoskeletal System?

Ultrasound is a safe and painless procedure that produces images of the inside of the body using sound waves. Ultrasound images of the musculoskeletal system provide pictures of muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and soft tissue throughout the body. Ultrasound imaging, also called sonography, involves the use of a small transducer (probe) and ultrasound gel placed directly on the skin. The transducer collects the sounds that bounce back and a computer then uses those sound waves to create an image. Ultrasound exams do not involve radiation exposure.

What are some common uses of the procedure?

Ultrasound images are typically used to help diagnose:

- Tendon tears, or tendinitis of different tendons throughout the body
- Muscle tears, masses or fluid collection
- Inflammation or fluid (effusions) within the joints
- Early changes of Rheumatoid Arthritis and Ganglion cysts
- Nerve entrapments such as carpal tunnel syndrome
- Hernias
- Foreign bodies in the soft tissues (such as splinters or glass)
- Dislocations of the hip joint in children
- Neck muscle abnormalities in infants with torticollis
- Soft tissue masses (lumps/bumps)

How should I prepare for a Musculoskeletal Ultrasound?

- Please wear comfortable, loose -fitting clothing for your ultrasound exam. You may need to remove some clothing and jewelry in the area to be examined.
- You may be asked to change into a hospital gown for the procedure.
- If your child is being examined, it may be helpful to bring books, or small toys to entertain the child during the exam and make the time pass quickly.

How is the procedure performed?

- For most ultrasound exams, you will be positioned lying comfortably on your back
- The sonographer will apply a warm water-based gel to the area of the body being studied.
- The transducer is moved back and forth over the area of interest until the desired images are captured. Ultrasound exams do not involve radiation exposure.

What will I experience during and after the procedure?

- There is usually no discomfort from pressure as the transducer is pressed against the area being examined. However, if scanning is performed over an area of tenderness, you may feel pressure or minor pain from the transducer.
- Our radiologist will interpret your exam, analyze the images and send a report to your ordering healthcare provider within 24 hours.