

What is an Abdominal Ultrasound?

Ultrasound is a safe and painless procedure that produces images of the inside of the body using sound waves. Ultrasound imaging of the scrotum provides pictures of the abdominal organs. 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 forth and a computer then uses those sound waves to create an image. A Doppler ultrasound study may be part of an abdominal ultrasound examination. Doppler ultrasound is a special ultrasound technique that evaluates blood flow within certain organs or vessels.

What are some common uses of the procedure?

Abdominal ultrasound imaging is performed to evaluate the kidneys, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, abdominal aorta and other blood vessels of the abdomen.

Abdominal ultrasound is used to help diagnose a variety of conditions such as:

- Abdominal pain or distention
- Abnormal liver function
- Enlarged abdominal organ
- Stones in the gallbladder or kidney
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)
- Provide guidance for biopsies

Doppler ultrasound images can help evaluate:

- Blockages to blood flow (such as clots)
- Narrowing of vessels
- Tumors and congenital vascular malformations

How should I prepare for an Abdominal 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.
- For the study of the liver, gallbladder, spleen aorta and pancreas, you may be asked to eat a fat-free meal on the evening before the test and then to avoid eating for 8 hours before the test.
- For the study of the kidneys, you may be asked to drink 8 ounces of water about an hour before the test to fill your bladder.

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.