

Ultrasound Scan

What is an ultrasound scan?

An **ultrasound scan** is a medical test that uses high frequency sound waves to capture images of the inside of your body. We do not need to make an incision (cut) into your body to do this. The main part of the ultrasound machine is the transducer, which makes the sound waves and receives the echoes. It looks like a microphone.

Unlike other x-ray techniques, ultrasound uses no radiation and, thus, carries no risk. That is why it is the preferred method of viewing a developing fetus during pregnancy.

Most people relate ultrasound scans with pregnancy. However, your doctor can order an ultrasound scan if you have pain, swelling, or other symptoms that may require an inside look of your organs. Your doctor can see problems with organs, vessels and tissue such as the:

- Bladder
- Gallbladder
- Pancreas
- Kidneys
- Liver
- Thyroid
- Uterus
- Testicles
- Prostate
- Breast
- Ovaries

Blood vessels. Surgeons can also use ultrasounds to guide them through the body during certain medical procedures, such as biopsies.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

Please let your doctor know if you are currently taking any medicines, including prescription or over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, or blood thinners. Your doctor will let you which medicines, if any, to stop taking before your scan.

Depending on the area or organ we are scanning, you may receive different instructions on how to prepare for the procedure

The day before your ultrasound:

- **If you are getting a scan of your stomach area (abdomen):** Your doctor may ask you not to eat or drink for 8 to 12 hours before your scan. Undigested food might block the sound waves from the scan. This will make it hard for the technologist to get a clear picture.
- **If you are getting a scan of your gallbladder, spleen or pancreas:** Your doctor may ask you to eat a fat-free meal the evening before your scan. After that meal, you must fast (stop eating and drinking) until the procedure. However, you can continue to drink water and take any medicines your doctor instructed.

On the day of your ultrasound:

Please bring the following to the hospital:

- Your health card (OHIP) and photo ID.
- All the medicines you are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, in their original containers.

Do not bring jewelry or other valuables.

- It is important to follow all the instructions your doctor has provided to you.
- If you took any medicines (such as prescription, over-the-counter or herbal supplements) before your scan, be sure to let the technologist know the name of the medicine and how much you took (dose).

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What can I expect during the procedure?

We will ask you to change into a hospital gown and lie on a bed. Please keep the body part we are scanning uncovered.

An ultrasound technologist will apply a special lubricating jelly to your skin. This prevents friction when he/she rubs the transducer on your skin.

Through this transducer, the technologist is able to obtain images for the radiologist to view and report.

When the technologist finishes the scan, he/she will clean the gel off your body. The whole procedure typically lasts less than 30 minutes.

What can I expect after the procedure?

You may be able to get dressed and go home soon after you have finished your scan.

How do I care for myself at home?

You may resume all your regular activities.



Contact your doctor or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you notice any of the following:

- You feel generally unwell (including weakness or dizziness) or have discomfort.