



Radiology Services

Abdominal/Renal Ultrasound

Understanding Your Abdominal/Renal Ultrasound

Your doctor has requested an ultrasound exam of your abdomen and/or kidneys. An abdominal ultrasound includes an evaluation of your liver, pancreas, spleen, gallbladder, kidneys, urinary bladder and abdominal vessels. A renal ultrasound evaluates your kidneys and urinary bladder.

We hope this sheet will answer common questions you may have about this procedure.

What is ultrasound?

Medical ultrasound uses sound waves far above the range of normal human hearing. A beam of high frequency sound is passed into the body. The echoes or reflections are received and converted by the instrument into an image, providing useful information about internal organs.

How can an abdominal ultrasound help me?

Ultrasound is extremely useful in providing information about your abdominal organs. Your doctor may order an ultrasound to evaluate your abdomen for reasons such as pain, nausea and/or vomiting, abdominal distention or palpable mass. Renal ultrasounds usually are performed because of blood in the urine, urinary tract infections or back pain. Ultrasound does not involve radiation.

How should I prepare for the exam?

DO NOT eat or drink anything six to eight hours before an abdominal exam. You may take medication with a small amount of water if necessary. No preparation is needed for a renal ultrasound.

What happens just before the exam?

Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled time to register. Orders for your exam are necessary to perform the procedure—**we cannot proceed without them**. Please bring a copy of your insurance card. After you are registered in the business office, you will be directed to the Radiology Department.

What happens during the exam?

After entering the ultrasound corridor, you will be under the care of the sonographer—a specialist who performs the examination to produce ultrasonic images of internal

organs. During the exam, the sonographer will make you as comfortable as possible.

You will be placed on a table or stretcher, and warm gel will be applied to the skin of your abdomen. The gel's purpose is to provide lubrication and allow the transducer to slide easily over the skin. The only area that will be exposed is your abdomen.

The sonographer then will begin the exam by passing the transducer over each area of the abdomen that is to be evaluated. It will be necessary for the sonographer to apply light pressure to the abdomen. You may be asked to take in a deep breath and hold it in for a few seconds. The sonographer will take measurements of various organs and look for any abnormalities.

How long does the exam take?

An abdominal ultrasound takes about one hour.

Is it painful?

No, but you will feel some light pressure on the skin of your abdomen.

Is ultrasound safe?

Ultrasound has been used for more than 25 years in millions of cases. A harmful effect has never been found in a human.

How will I get the results?

After the exam, the radiologist will review the images. He or she may come into the room to scan also. The radiologist then will dictate your exam and give a report to your doctor, who will discuss the exam with you.

We hope you are pleased with the care you receive in the Radiology Department. Our goal is to give you the very best care and attention.

For more information, please call Patient Scheduling at (864) 455-7774 or visit ghs.org/radiology.