

Abdominal Ultrasound

What is an Abdominal Ultrasound?

An abdominal ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves, which reflect off your body structures to produce real time images. This is a noninvasive procedure to examine organs in the abdomen such as the gallbladder, kidneys, liver, spleen, pancreas, as well as major blood vessels within the abdomen. Since this test displays on a screen with real time movement, the sonographer is able to record the entire exam for the radiologist to read. There is no radiation exposure with an ultrasound.

Why is it done?

Your provider may order an abdominal ultrasound for several reasons including:

- Detecting gallstones in your gallbladder
- Determining cause of abdominal pain
- Detecting problems with the pancreas, liver, aorta, and kidneys
- Determining if a mass is filled with fluid or solid
- Abnormal Lab Values
- Look for damage after injury
- There are many other reasons to have an abdominal ultrasound but those listed above are the most common.

Patient preparation

- Nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before your exam.
- You may take all prescribed medications as directed by your physician with small sips of water.

What to expect

You may be provided with a gown and asked to remove your clothing and any jewelry. During the ultrasound you will lie on a table and warm gel will be applied to your abdomen area. The technician will use what is called a transducer or probe to view your abdominal organs. The sonographer will slowly glide the transducer over the area being examined. You may be asked to hold your breath while certain images are obtained.

This test usually takes between 30 to 45 minutes.

Risks

There are no known risks with this test. As stated before, there is no radiation exposure during this exam.

Report

A radiologist will review your ultrasound and forward the results on to your healthcare provider. Your provider will discuss the results with you as well as next steps.