What Is an Ultrasound Examination?

Ultrasound is high frequency sound waves that the human ear cannot hear. It can pass through the skin and tissues without being felt or heard. Ultrasound examinations use these high frequency sound waves to produce images of tissues in the body.

Why Do I Need Ultrasound Examinations?

Ultrasound examinations can help doctors to detect many diseases. Ultrasonography of the gallbladder may show stones. An image of the breast, thyroid, liver, kidney, or pancreas may show masses and other pathologies.

Ultrasound examination of pregnant mother can help doctor to assess the condition of the baby inside the womb. Ultrasonography of major blood vessels can detect problems such as clots.

Under normal clinical practice ultrasound examination is painless and harmless to our body.

What Are the Benefits?

- a safe procedure which does not have the risks associated with imaging that uses radiation
- relatively faster, convenient and comfortable

How Do I Prepare for My Examination?

Wear loose, comfortable clothing when you come for your ultrasound examinations. You will need to uncover the skin over the area to be examined. You may be asked to change into an examination gown.

Abdomen ultrasound
- You need to fast for eight hours before the ultrasound examination. It ensures the gallbladder is not contracted so it can be imaged appropriately
- Drink a moderate amount of water

Obstetric ultrasound
- Drink a moderate amount of water

Female pelvis ultrasound
- You may need to drink several glasses of water beforehand so that your bladder is comfortably full during ultrasonography

Pediatric and other ultrasound (Breast, Thyroid, Neck)
- No preparation is required

How Is the Procedure Performed?

You will lie on a padded couch for the examination. The sonographer will apply gel to your skin over the area to be studied. Then, a hand-held transducer will be moved over the gel on your skin. Ultrasound waves do not travel well through air, and the gel is used to prevent air bubbles from interfering with the ultrasound.

The transducer sends the ultrasound waves out and also receives the waves when they bounce back. You will not see or feel the sound waves. You may be asked to lie still, and perhaps to hold your breath, so that clear ultrasound images can be obtained.

Multiple ultrasound images will be taken during examination for record and future reference.

An ultrasound examination takes around 30 minutes to complete and may take longer depending on the area of the body to be studied and the degree of difficulty of the examination.

When your examination is over, the gel will be removed from your skin and you are free to leave. You may go back to your regular diet and activities after this study.

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