

ULTRASOUND

An ultrasound is a medical imaging technique which uses high-frequency sound waves. It is a very simple examination and is completely painless.

During the ultrasound, the radiologist will apply a probe against the skin, moving over the area of interest to create images of the inside of the body.

The probe (otherwise called a 'transducer') will emit sound waves that bounce off tissues and organs to form a multi-dimensional image that helps detect diseases and damaged tissue, locate abnormal growths, and detect a range of health conditions.

The examination will approximately last between 10 to 20 minutes, allowing the study of multiple abdominal organs (liver, spleen pancreas, kidneys, bladder, genital organs), the neck (thyroid, ganglia) but also of the vessels (arteries, veins), the ligaments and the heart.

Ultrasounds requiring preparation

Abdominal ultrasound: The patient will need to fast from midnight the night before the examination. An empty stomach is required at least 6 hours before the examination, if done in the afternoon (light, fat-free breakfast).

Pelvic ultrasound: Drink 500 ml. of water an hour before the exam and do not urinate.

Prostate ultrasound: The patient will need to conduct a Fleet enema 1h30 before the exam.

Breast ultrasound: If a previous breast examination was completed at a different medical establishment, the patient shall bring images and reports of such examinations on the day of their appointment.

Thyroid biopsy: The patient needs to stop taking any and all anticoagulants (i.e. blood thinning medication) such as Coumadin or Aspirin 7 days before the examination, unless otherwise advised by a doctor. In such a case, the patient must mention this to the receptionist upon booking their appointment.

Medical contraindication

For patients undergoing an abdominal or pelvic ultrasound: it is necessary to ensure that you have not undergone a digestive endoscopy exam (i.e. gastroscopy, colonoscopy) within the 12 hours preceding your appointment.

The ultrasound procedure (step by step)

- Before the exam, one of our assistants will take care of you and accompany you into the examination room, where you will be told to lie down on the examination table (usually on your back).
- In order to improve the contact with the probe, the radiologist will apply a lubricating gel to your skin. The gel acts not only to prevent friction but also to facilitate the movement of the probe across the skin in the area which is to be examined. The radiologist will occasionally ask you to turn on your side, to take a breath, to exhale deeply or even to hold your breath. At times, and for a more in depth study of certain organs (i.e. bladder, prostate, ovaries, uterus), the probe will need to be inserted into natural passages (i.e. anus, vagina).
- You may leave our premises once the examination is over.

The immediate effects of the procedure

This procedure is absolutely painless. It is nevertheless possible to feel a slight pressure when the radiologist is pushing down on the probe for an enhanced visibility of the area of interest.

The sound waves are not dangerous. In fact, there are no risks related to this procedure, seeing that it uses a non-invasive method.

After the procedure

Your results will be sent to your attending physician, who will follow up if necessary.