

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Ultrasound imaging, also called ultrasound scanning or sonography, is a method of obtaining images of internal organs by sending high-frequency sound waves into the body.

The sound wave echoes, which have a frequency higher than people can hear, are recorded and displayed as a real-time visual image.

Obstetric ultrasound refers to the specialized use of sound waves to visualize and thus determine the condition of a pregnant woman and her embryo or fetus.

To prepare for an obstetric ultrasound, you should wear a loose fitting two-piece outfit for the examination. Only the lower abdominal area needs to be exposed during this procedure; consequently, a two-piece outfit will prevent you from having to readjust or remove all of your clothing.

If an ultrasound is required early in your pregnancy, you may be required to have a full bladder for the procedure. Air interferes with sound waves, so if your bladder is distended, the air-filled bowel is pushed out of the way and an image of the uterus and embryo or fetus is obtained.

The radiologist or sonographer may elect to examine an early pregnancy or the cervix by means of transvaginal ultrasound. This requires an empty urinary bladder.

A complete obstetric ultrasound examination usually takes between 20-60 minutes.

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HR We will have your results back to your doctor within 48 hours.

Humboldt General Hospital provides state-of-the-art radiology services to men, women and children of all ages. Ensuring the most accurate diagnostic results is our goal. Services are performed in a timely and compassionate manner; meeting our patients' needs is our top priority.

Every member of Humboldt General Hospital's radiology team has achieved his or her registry through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Registration is the one-time process of initially recognizing individuals who have satisfied certain standards within a profession. A person is certified by the ARRT after meeting educational preparation standards, complying with ethics standards, and passing a comprehensive exam.

Clinical excellence is just one part of the department's three-pronged "Promise to the Community." Humboldt General Hospital's Radiology Department also is committed to premium customer service, offering extended evening and weekend hours, as well as the most advanced technology possible for its nine modalities: MRI, CT Scan, X-Ray, Fluoroscopy, Vascular Ultrasound, Obstetrical Ultrasound, Cardiac Ultrasound, Mammography and Bone Densitometry.

We look forward to serving you. Please call Humboldt General Hospital's Radiology Department at (775) 623-5222, ext. 133, with any questions or concerns you may have, or to schedule an appointment.

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- ✓ CLINICAL EXCELLENCE
- ✓ PREMIUM CUSTOMER SERVICE
- ✓ ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

HGH
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OBSTETRIC ULTRASOUND



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OBSTETRIC ULTRASOUND

at Humboldt General Hospital



WHY GET AN ULTRASOUND?

Obstetric ultrasound should be performed only when clinically indicated. Some of the indications include:

- To establish the presence of a living embryo/fetus
- To determine the number of embryos/fetuses
- To estimate the age of the pregnancy
- To evaluate the position of the fetus
- To diagnose fetal abnormalities
- To evaluate the placenta
- To evaluate fetal growth and wellbeing
- To assess the cervix or mouth of the womb

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE EXAM?

You will be asked to lie on your back or side. You will also be asked to expose your lower abdominal area. The sonographer or radiologist then spreads a warm water-soluble gel over your lower abdomen. This gel allows better transmission of the sound waves by making it easier to move the transducer over your abdomen and by sending the sound beam directly into the body without the interference from even a tiny amount of air on the skin.

The transducer emits high-frequency sound waves as the sonographer or radiologist moves it over your abdomen. The transducer also detects the

echoes that bounce off anatomic structures as reflections.

Sometimes the radiologist determines that a transvaginal scan will need to be performed. Instead of a transducer being moved over your abdomen, the high-frequency waves will be emitted by a transducer placed in the vagina.

This technique often provides improved, more detailed images of the uterus and ovaries. It is especially useful in early pregnancy. With this approach the urinary bladder needs to be empty. Only two to three inches of the transducer are inserted into the vagina. The rest of the transducer is a handle for use by the operator.

WHAT WILL I EXPERIENCE?

This is a painless procedure. There may be



varying degrees of discomfort from pressure as the sonographer or radiologist guides the transducer over your abdomen, especially if you are required to have a full bladder.

At times the sonographer may have to press more firmly to get closer to the embryo or fetus to better visualize the structure. This discomfort is temporary. Also, you may dislike the feeling of the water-soluble gel applied to your abdomen.

With transvaginal scanning, there may be minimal discomfort as the transducer is moved in the vagina.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?

Obstetric ultrasound cannot identify all fetal abnormalities. Consequently, when there are clinical or laboratory suspicions for a possible abnormality, a pregnant woman may have to undergo nonradiologic, invasive testing such as amniocentesis (the evaluation of fluid taken from the sac surrounding the fetus) or chorionic villus sampling (evaluation of placental tissue) to determine the health of the fetus, or she may be referred by her primary care physician to a perinatologist (an obstetrician specializing in high-risk pregnancies).

WHAT ABOUT THE RESULTS?

A radiologist, who is a physician experienced in obstetric ultrasound and other radiology examinations, will analyze the images and send a signed report with his or her interpretation to the patient's personal physician.

The patient receives ultrasound results from the referring physician who ordered the test.