



CANCER INSTITUTE

Wayne State University

## Ultrasound



## **Ultrasound (also known as scanning or sonography)**

Ultrasound is a safe and painless way to take pictures of the inside of the body. The machine uses sound waves to display pictures on the screen. The procedure involves the use of a small transducer (probe) which collects the “sound” and bounces it back to a computer to create a picture/image.

Ultrasound examinations do not use dangerous (ionizing) radiation.

Ultrasound is used to view tissues and organs.

You may have heard of an ultrasound when a woman is pregnant to view the baby for any issues.

### **How to Prepare**

Preparation for an ultrasound will depend on the type of exam ordered.

You will be given instructions upon scheduling your exam.

For an ultrasound of the abdomen, you may be asked not to eat or drink (fast) for several hours prior to the exam. This is to avoid gas and food buildup in the intestines, which can block clear images.

Pelvic ultrasound exams require you drink 32 oz. of water one hour before the examination.

**Trans-Vaginal Ultrasound:** A smaller specially designed transducer (probe) is placed into the vagina. In most cases, these methods can provide better images than traditional ultrasound or other diagnostic method. During a trans-vaginal ultrasound, a female staff member will be with you.

**To obtain the best pictures possible during a pelvic or trans-vaginal ultrasound it is important to NOT empty your bladder before the examination. (Refer to the instructions given during scheduling for the amount of fluid to drink)**

### **What to Expect During the Procedure**

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown, depending on the part being scanned.

The technologist will apply a special lubricating jelly to your skin. This prevents friction so the transducer (probe) can slide across your skin and helps transmit the sound waves. The transducer (probe) looks like a microphone.

You may be asked to change or move into different positions in order to obtain the best images.

The entire exam takes anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the area being examined.

### **After the Exam**

The gel will be cleaned off your skin after the exam is complete.

The images are reviewed and interpreted by a physician called a radiologist. A report will be sent to your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will review the results with you.