

# Ultrasound – Your Role in Patient Safety

## Ultrasound

An ultrasound scan (sonogram) is an examination that uses sound waves to create an image of your body. It can be used as a routine test for pregnant women, aid in treatment and is used to diagnose conditions in many parts of the body, including kidneys, liver, veins and arteries, etc.

Ultrasound can also be used to guide doctors during certain procedures (such as biopsy), where a tissue sample is needed for analysis.

Ultrasound is painless and usually takes from 20 to 60 minutes to perform depending on what examination your physician has requested.

## Ultrasound Safety

Unlike x-rays, ultrasound does not use ionizing radiation. It uses high frequency sound waves to produce detailed images of your body. Ultrasound is very safe and most people can have this examination including pregnant women and babies.

## Ultrasonic Gel

Special gel is spread over your skin during the examination, which allows the technologist to see your organs as clearly as possible. The gel does not contain any sensitizers or fragrances that may irritate your skin or cause a reaction.

## Medications

You should never stop taking any prescribed medications, unless you are advised by your physician or health care provider responsible for your care.

## Preparation

For some ultrasound examinations, you may be asked to follow some instructions to prepare for the test, such as, drink water and not go to the bathroom until after the test OR avoid eating for several hours before the scan. You will be advised of any instructions to be followed before your procedure.

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## Let us Know if You Are:

- Are anxious about your ultrasound examination
- Have any questions or concerns about pregnancy
- Unable to perform any of the instructions required for the test, before your appointment.

## Safety Tips

- Ensure you inform the staff of any slip, trip or falls you may have had within the last six months
- Bring any mobility aide you use at home with you to assist in your examinations (canes, walkers, etc.)
- Help promote infection control in the hospital by using the hand sanitizer, from the stations or dispensers provided

## Self-Screen

Please reschedule your appointment if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble Breathing

To ensure your safety, please inform staff if you are uncomfortable or need assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-469-6580 ext. 2040.