

Ultrasound Patient Safety Sheet

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 used to diagnose conditions in many parts of the body, including the kidneys, the liver and the heart (echocardiogram).

Ultrasound can also be used to guide doctors during certain procedures (such as a biopsy), where a tissue sample is needed for analysis. Ultrasound scans can be performed in many ways. The scanner can be used on your skin, or through the natural openings of your body, such as the mouth.

Ultrasound is painless and usually takes from 30 to 45 minutes to perform, depending on what your doctor wants to see. Before having your examination, you will be asked about your medical history. You will be advised of any instructions needed to be followed before your procedure.

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 us 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. Strict safety measures are followed to ensure that there is no patient cross contamination of the gel. A sterile gel is available and used when needed.

Medications

You should never stop taking any prescribed medications, unless you are advised to by your family doctor or other health care professional 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 washroom until after the test OR avoid eating for several hours before the scan.

Ultrasound

Your Role in Patient Safety

Let Us Know If You:

- Are anxious about your ultrasound examination
- Have any questions or concerns about pregnancy
- Are unable to perform any of the instructions required for the test (diabetic, incontinent , etc) 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 aids you use at home with you, to assist in your examination
- Help promote infection control within the hospital, by using the hand sanitizer from the stations provided
- Wear your hospital ID bracelet while you are at the hospital

Self-Screen

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

- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Body aches or tiredness
- Bad headache

To ensure your safety, inform the staff if you are uncomfortable, need assistance or questions answered. Free interpretation services are available, upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-431-8107 (General campus) or 416-495-2480 (Birchmount campus).