



---

## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# About Your Ultrasound

This information will help you get ready for your ultrasound at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK). An ultrasound is also called a sonogram.

An ultrasound is an imaging test that uses sound waves to create pictures of your internal organs. It can be used to check blood flow or see if a mass is solid or filled with fluid. There's no radiation with an ultrasound, you usually don't need any injections (shots), and there are no known harmful side effects.

## What to Expect

During your ultrasound, you will lie on a bed or stretcher. Your ultrasound technologist will put a gel on the area of your body that's being looked at. Then, they will move a small device called a probe over the surface of your skin.

Your ultrasound technologist can't tell you your results during your scan. When your ultrasound is finished, a radiologist will review your ultrasound results and send your healthcare provider a written report within 24 hours. Ask your healthcare provider how and when you will get the results from your ultrasound.

## Types of Ultrasounds

There are different types of ultrasounds. They're named after the area of your body that's being looked at.

How you need to get ready for your ultrasound depends on the type of ultrasound you're having. Follow the instructions below the type of ultrasound you're having. If you have any questions, or if you aren't sure

which type of ultrasound you're having, contact your healthcare provider.

## **Abdominal ultrasound**

An abdominal ultrasound is used to look at the organs in your abdomen (belly). These include your liver, gallbladder, pancreas, spleen, and kidneys.

- Don't eat or drink for 6 hours before your ultrasound. Having an empty stomach makes it easier to see your gallbladder and other internal organs.
- Take your medications with a sip of water.
- If you take medication for diabetes (such as insulin), ask the healthcare provider who prescribes it for you what to do.

## **Pelvic ultrasound**

A pelvic ultrasound is used to look at the organs in your pelvis. These include your ovaries, uterus, cervix, vagina, and bladder.

- Drink 4 to 6 (8-ounce) cups of water 1 hour before your ultrasound.
- Don't urinate (pee) before your ultrasound. Having a full bladder will make it easier to see your uterus and ovaries.
- If close-up views of the lining of your uterus and your ovaries are needed, you may have a transvaginal ultrasound after your pelvic ultrasound. For more information, read the "Transvaginal ultrasound" section below.

## **Combined abdominal and pelvic ultrasound**

A combined abdominal and pelvic ultrasound is used to look at the organs in your abdomen and pelvis.

- Don't eat solid food for 6 hours before your ultrasound.
- Drink 4 to 6 (8-ounce) cups of water 1 hour before your ultrasound.
- Don't urinate (pee) before your ultrasound.

## **Transvaginal ultrasound**

A transvaginal ultrasound is used to look at the lining of your uterus and your ovaries.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.
- You will lie down with your legs raised, like you do during a Pap smear or pelvic exam. Your ultrasound technologist will insert the ultrasound probe, which is shaped like a wand, into your vagina.

## **Renal ultrasound**

A renal ultrasound is used to look at 1 or both of your kidneys.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Urinary bladder ultrasound**

A urinary bladder ultrasound is used to look at your bladder.

- Drink 4 (8-ounce) cups of water 45 minutes before your ultrasound.
- Don't urinate (pee) before your ultrasound.

## **Venous ultrasound (Doppler)**

A venous ultrasound is used to diagnose blood clots in your legs or arms.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Breast ultrasound**

A breast ultrasound is used to look at the inside of 1 or both of your breasts.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Scrotal ultrasound**

A scrotal ultrasound is used to look at 1 or both of your testicles, epididymis, and scrotum.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Carotid artery ultrasound**

A carotid artery ultrasound is used to look at blood vessels in your neck. These vessels supply blood to your head.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Thyroid ultrasound**

A thyroid ultrasound is used to look at your thyroid gland. Your thyroid gland is located in the front of your neck.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.

## **Ultrasound-guided thyroid biopsy or lymph node biopsy**

This type of ultrasound is used to guide the placement of a thin needle into your thyroid gland or lymph node. Cells are removed and sent to the laboratory to find out if you have any cancerous or other abnormal cells.

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.
- This test can be done even if you're taking aspirin or other anticoagulants (medications to thin your blood). But, if a large needle will be used for the biopsy, the radiologist doing your procedure will contact you with instructions.

## **Hysterosonogram**

A hysterosonogram is used to look at the lining of your uterus and to check for polyps (growths of tissue).

- You don't need to do anything to get ready.
- If you still get your period (are premenopausal):
  - You should have the test the first 8 to 12 days after you start your period (menstrual cycle). The best time to have it is right after you stop bleeding.
  - Don't have unprotected vaginal sex during the first 12 days of your

menstrual cycle.

- If you're pregnant or think you might be pregnant, this test can't be done.
- If you have an intrauterine device (IUD), this test can't be done.
- Sterile saline will be put into your uterus through a small, soft catheter (thin, flexible tube) in your vagina.
- You will be given instructions to follow after your procedure. Avoid sexual activity, swimming, and taking baths for 5 days after your procedure.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

About Your Ultrasound - Last updated on January 3, 2019

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center