

Ultrasound: Renal Exam

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains how to prepare for an ultrasound exam of the kidney and bladder. It includes how ultrasound works, how it is done, what you will feel during the exam, and how to get your results.

What is a renal ultrasound?

Ultrasound exams use sound waves to create images of the inside of your body. A *renal* ultrasound checks the health of your kidneys and bladder. Ultrasound can also show the blood vessels in your kidneys.

How does the exam work?

A *sonographer* (ultrasound technologist) will use a hand-held device that sends and receives sound waves. This device is called a *transducer*.

First, gel will be applied to your skin to help the transducer make contact. The sonographer will then press the transducer against your skin. As the sound waves bounce off your body's tissues, images are created. These images will appear on a computer monitor for your radiologist to see.

How should I prepare?

- You do not need to prepare in any special way for a renal ultrasound.
- Wear a loose-fitting, comfortable, 2-piece outfit. Only your lower abdomen needs to be exposed for this exam.

How is the exam done?

- You will lie on an exam table. The sonographer will move your clothing away from your lower abdomen.
- The sonographer will apply warm gel to your abdomen. This helps the transducer make contact with your skin.



Talk with your urologist if you have any questions about your renal health.

- The sonographer will then press the transducer against your skin and move it over your abdomen.
- If needed, the radiologist may take more images after the sonographer is done.

What will I feel during the exam?

- There is little or no discomfort with ultrasound exams.
- You will feel the sonographer apply warm gel to your abdomen and move the transducer over your abdomen.
- You may be asked to roll on your side, or to change positions.
- The exam usually takes less than 45 minutes.

Who interprets the results of the exam and how do I get them?

A radiologist who specializes in ultrasound will review the images and send a report to your referring doctor. You will receive your results from the doctor who ordered the test. The radiologist may also talk with you about early findings when your exam is over.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UWMC Imaging Services:
206.598.6200
- UW Roosevelt Imaging
Services: 206.598.6868
- Harborview Imaging
Services: 206.744.3105