

What is ultrasound?

Ultrasound or sonography involves sending sound waves into the body. These sound waves bounce off tissues and form a computer picture through the handheld transducer. Ultrasound images are captured in real time so they can show movement of internal tissues and organs, as well as flow of blood in the arteries and veins. Some tests of the tissues can be performed while watching (dynamic testing) to assess if tissues are inflamed, and injections can be performed more safely and accurately.

Is ultrasound safe?

Yes! Ultrasound is very safe. It does not involve any radiation and can be completed even if you have a cardiac pacemaker, defibrillator, or metallic implants.

How should I prepare for my procedure?

You should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing for your ultrasound exam. No other preparations are needed or required. You will have to remove clothing and jewelry in the procedural area to be examined, but modesty will be maintained with drapes as needed.

What can be seen on an ultrasound image?

An ultrasound image is a useful way of examining the musculoskeletal system of the body to detect problems with muscles, tendons, ligaments, joint surfaces, and soft tissues such as blood vessels. Ultrasound cannot penetrate bone and, therefore, cannot be used to diagnose all bone problems. For visualizing the internal structure of bones or certain joints, other imaging modalities, such as MRI or CT scan, might also be needed.



Who interprets the results?

A physician will be performing the entire exam and will share the results with you immediately. In addition, the images will be saved to your electronic medical record along with a formal report. Often, you will follow up with your original physician for further treatment planning.

An ultrasound image can diagnose:

- Strains or tears (rotator cuff)
- Tendon irritation (tendinitis, tendinopathy)
- Ligament tears (UCL)
- Soft tissue masses (ganglion cyst, neuroma)
- Foreign bodies
- Fluid collections