

Pelvic Ultrasound

How to prepare for your exam

What is pelvic ultrasound imaging?

Ultrasound is used to view the organs by sending sound waves into the body. The sound waves are captured and displayed on a screen. For women, pelvic ultrasound is used to check the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and nearby structures. In men, pelvic ultrasound is used to study the bladder and prostate gland.

How does the exam work?

Ultrasound sends sound waves into the body using a transducer, a hand-held device that sends and receives sound waves. After gel is applied to the skin, the sonographer (ultrasound technologist) presses the device against the skin to take pictures, which then appear on a screen. As the sound waves echo (return) from the body's fluids and tissues, an image is formed.

Does the timing of my menstrual cycle matter for a pelvic ultrasound?

If you are having menstrual cycles, the optimal time for your examination may be 7-10 days after the first day of menstrual bleeding. This specific timing will improve the visibility of structures in your uterus and improve the radiologist's ability to provide a diagnosis. When scheduling, you should expect to be asked questions about your last menstrual period. You may be asked to schedule your exam within a specific set of dates. We will always work with you to make sure this fits with your schedule and the urgency of the examination.

How should I prepare for a pelvic ultrasound?

- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing for your exam.
- In most cases, you will be asked to drink a quart (32 oz) of water before your exam to fill your bladder. A full bladder helps to locate the uterus, ovaries, and bladder during the exam.

How is the exam done?

- You will lie on an exam table and clothing will be moved away from the lower abdominal area.



- Warm gel is applied to the abdomen to make contact between your skin and the transducer.
- The sonographer then presses the device against your skin and sweeps it over the abdomen to obtain pictures.
- The sonographer will show the pictures to the radiologist. The radiologist may request more pictures to complete your exam.

What will I feel during a pelvic ultrasound?

Pelvic ultrasound is relatively painless. In most cases, there are 2 parts to the pelvic ultrasound: transabdominal evaluation and transvaginal evaluation.

With the transabdominal ultrasound, you may feel some discomfort due to the pressure of the device on your lower abdomen and full bladder. The sonographer will apply warm gel to your skin and will sweep the device along your skin to take the pictures.

Transvaginal ultrasound (where a specific transducer is placed into the vagina) is performed to see certain structures more clearly. For this portion of the examination, you will need to empty your bladder. A transvaginal ultrasound is usually more comfortable than a manual pelvic exam.

Each method has its advantages. Your referring doctor or radiologist will decide if using one method or both is best for your needs.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

The radiologist (a medical doctor specializing in diagnostic imaging, including ultrasound) will review the pictures and send the report directly to your doctor. You will receive your examination results from the doctor who ordered the test. In some cases, the radiologist may discuss findings with you at the end of your exam.