



FACT SHEET

The Niagara Health System is pleased to provide you with general information about your upcoming exam.

WHAT IS AN ULTRASOUND SCAN?

An ultrasound is an examination which uses high-frequency sound waves to create images. Ultrasound does not involve radiation. A Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer will perform your exam.

IS THERE ANY PREPARATION ON MY PART PRIOR TO THE EXAM?

Yes, preparation is required for some ultrasound exams. If preparation is required, you will be notified by your doctor's office. The following are some common ultrasound exams that require preparation:

Abdominal: This exam studies the organs in your abdomen (liver, gallbladder, pancreas, kidneys, spleen, aorta). Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight of the day prior to your exam.

Pelvic or Obstetrical: Whether you are pregnant or not, you will be required to drink four 250 mL (8 ounce) glasses of water one hour before your appointment time. *Please do not use the restroom until after the exam.* Your bladder must be full in order to study the pelvic organs and, if you are pregnant, the anatomy of the baby. Your bowel lies in front of these structures/organs, and a full bladder will push the bowel away to allow a better view.

There are a number of other ultrasound exams that do not require any preparation.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO MY APPOINTMENT?

Please bring your Ontario Health Card. Please note that the Niagara Health System is a scent-free environment.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT DURING MY EXAMINATION?

Depending on the type of exam, you may be asked to change into a gown. The Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer will ask you questions concerning your medical history and current symptoms that are important to your exam.

All exams are performed by applying a special gel to the area and moving a small probe called a transducer over the area.

Some pelvic exams also require imaging of the vagina. In this case a special transducer is placed in the vagina. You will be asked to empty your bladder and remove your underwear before this exam. The lubricated transducer is placed into your vagina and the necessary images recorded. This technique allows a more detailed exam of the adjacent structures.

Vascular exams use a special Doppler transducer that evaluates the blood flow through your arteries and veins. You will hear noises similar to a heartbeat as the Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer evaluates the blood flow through your vessels.

HOW LONG WILL MY EXAMINATION LAST?

Depending on the type of exam, it will last from 30-90 minutes.

Your exam start time may be delayed if there are emergency cases.

WHO REPORTS MY PICTURES?

The pictures are reported by specially trained doctors. The results are sent to your doctor.

