

Obstetrical Ultrasound

Ultrasound uses energy in the form of sound waves to form images. The sound waves are released from a transducer and bounce back off tissues, fluids and bones to the transducer to form images. There is no radiation in ultrasound.

Ultrasounds are used to monitor and diagnose conditions of the neonate, placenta, uterus, and maternal anatomy during the pregnancy.

Ultrasound can be used to assess:

- Fetal position
 - Amniotic fluid
 - Fetal breathing, movement, heart rate
 - Fetal gestational age
 - Placenta
 - Number of fetuses
 - Fetal anatomy and sex
 - Fetal growth
 - Cervical length
 - Nuchal translucency measurements
- Non obstetrical uses in pregnancy
- Pelvic masses
 - Pelvic pain
 - Vaginal bleeding

How many ultrasounds will you have during pregnancy?

You will receive a dating ultrasound in early pregnancy to determine your due date. A nuchal translucency ultrasound is offered at the 12 week visit. This is a measurement of the clear space of tissue in the fetal neck. This is used in conjunction with your genetic testing to determine your risk for Down's Syndrome. An anatomy ultrasound is performed at 20 weeks to assess baby's anatomy. A 36 week ultrasound is recommended to check for baby's growth and position prior to term. Some women may have more ultrasounds due to higher risk pregnancies or medical/obstetrical conditions needing monitoring. You may be referred to a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist for a specialized ultrasound if you are considered a high risk pregnancy or if there are findings on ultrasound that warrant further examination.

Disclaimer: Please note ultrasound imaging is not 100%, it is limited by what it can detect and we can not guarantee that all abnormalities are seen with the imaging. Please understand it is also more difficult to see imaging if a patient has a higher body fat percentage that may impede the sound waves of the transducer.