



Renal Ultrasound

How to prepare for your exam

Renal ultrasound imaging is used to detect problems with the kidneys, bladder, and related blood vessels. Read this handout to learn how to prepare for the exam, how the exam works, how the exam is performed, what you will feel during the exam, and how to get your results.

What is renal ultrasound imaging?

Ultrasound imaging of the kidneys (renal area) involves using sound waves to view the organs inside the abdomen. The kidneys and bladder are the organs examined most often. Ultrasound can also examine the blood vessels in the kidneys.

How does the exam work?

Ultrasound imaging 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 (technologist) presses the device against the skin to take pictures, which then appear on a screen. As the sound waves echo from the body's fluids and tissues, an image is created showing the tissues that are being studied.

How should I prepare for a renal ultrasound?

- No preparation is needed for a renal ultrasound.
- If your bladder is being studied, make sure it is at least somewhat full.
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes.

How is the exam performed?

1. You will be placed on an exam table, with your clothing moved away from the target area.
2. A warm gel is applied to your abdomen to help the device make contact with your skin.
3. The sonographer will then press the device against your skin and sweep it over the abdomen to obtain the pictures.
4. The radiologist may obtain more pictures after the sonographer is done.

Questions?

Call 206-598-6200

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Imaging Services:
206-598-6200

What will I feel during the exam?

- Ultrasound imaging of the kidneys is fast, painless, and easy.
- You will feel the sonographer apply warm gel to your abdomen, and press the device against your skin. The device will be moved over your skin until all the pictures are taken.
- You may be asked to roll on either side, or to change positions.
- There is little or no discomfort with the exam. The exam usually takes less than 45 minutes.

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

The radiologist, who specializes in ultrasounds, will review the pictures and send the report to your referring doctor. You will receive your results from the doctor who ordered the test. In some cases, the radiologist may discuss early findings with you at the end of your exam.

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