

# Ultrasound



What an ultrasound room looks like

## What is an ultrasound?

An ultrasound is an exam that uses sound waves to view and make pictures, or images, of parts of your child's body. The ultrasound "camera" (transducer) is placed directly onto the skin. This camera sends sound waves that bounce off the organs in your child's body to create an image on the screen.

## What types of ultrasounds are done at Children's?

We can use ultrasound to view many parts of the body. The most common types of ultrasounds are:

- **Renal:** images of the kidneys and bladder.
- **Abdominal:** images of the liver, kidneys, gallbladder, spleen, pancreas and bladder.
- **Hip:** images and measurements are taken of the infant hip joint to look for dislocation.
- **Pelvic:** images of the uterus and ovaries.
- **Cranial:** images of the brain in a newborn. We can look through the soft spot (fontanel) to see the brain.

### To Learn More

- Radiology  
206-987-2089
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

### Why does my child need an ultrasound?

Your child's doctor has ordered this exam to get more information about your child's body. Ultrasound is used to see the shape, size and outline of many organs. Other information is also gathered to help your child's doctor plan their treatment.

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### How is the ultrasound done?

You are allowed to be with your child during the ultrasound. Your child does not need to change into a gown, but we ask that you dress your child comfortably. After your child lies down on the exam table, the Ultrasonographer will place gel on the area of the body to be imaged. Then they will move a small wand (transducer) over the gel. There are televisions in every ultrasound room, and you and your child may decide to watch a show. This distraction can help ease anxiety. The ultrasound usually takes 20 minutes or less.

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### How do I prepare my child?

Talk to your child about the ultrasound. Explain what will happen and why it is an important test. Let your child know that there are no needles and that the ultrasound doesn't hurt. Your child may feel some pressure as the transducer is moved over the body, and the gel may feel wet or cold. While many children can get restless, it is important to tell your child that if they are very still, the exam will be faster. Also, remind your child that the room will be a little dark, but you will stay with them until it is over.

A special diet is needed the night before and the morning of the exam for some types of ultrasound. Here are eating, drinking and other instructions for each type of ultrasound:

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#### Renal

Your child can eat and drink before a renal ultrasound, but please avoid gas-producing foods for 24 hours before your child's appointment.

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#### Abdominal, Abdominal Doppler and Renal Doppler

Follow these eating instructions before the ultrasound:

- For ages newborn to 3 years, your child may not eat or drink for 3 hours before their appointment time.
- For ages 3 to 6 years, your child may not eat or drink for 6 hours before their appointment time.
- For ages 6 and up, your child may not eat or drink for 8 hours before their ultrasound appointment time.

It is fine to take needed medicines with small sips of water.

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#### Limited Abdominal

We will give you instructions depending on the exam.

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#### Pelvic

Your child needs a full bladder for a pelvic ultrasound. For younger children please have them drink 1½ to 2 cups of water. For children 12 years old and over, have them drink 3 to 4½ cups of water or clear liquids, beginning 1 hour before the appointment time. After your child drinks the clear liquids, it is important that your child does not empty their bladder (pee) before the ultrasound. As soon as the ultrasound is over, your child may use the restroom.

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### Cranial

Your child may eat and drink like normal before this exam.

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### Hips

Your child may eat and drink like normal before this exam. Babies who have a dry diaper and were recently fed do better during the ultrasound.

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### Testicular

Your child may eat and drink like normal before this exam.

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### Spinal

Your child may eat and drink like normal before this exam.

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### Upper or Lower Extremity Doppler

Your child may eat and drink like normal before this exam.

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### How do we check in for the appointment?

Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

- Seattle Children's Main Campus 4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105. Use Ocean Parking. Check in at Ocean 6 registration desk.
  - Bellevue Clinic and Surgery Center, 1500 116 Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. Park in the underground parking garage. Check in at 2nd floor registration.
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### What happens after the ultrasound?

The images from your child's ultrasound are typically reviewed by a radiologist within 24 hours and a report will be sent to the doctor who ordered the test. If you have a clinic or doctor appointment scheduled, the doctor will review the results with you then. If you do not have a visit scheduled, you should call your child's doctor for the results.