

Renal Ultrasound

What is a kidney (renal) ultrasound?

An ultrasound of the kidneys is an exam to evaluate the structure and size of the kidneys and bladder. Unfortunately, ultrasound cannot evaluate the function of the kidneys, but it can look for anything that may be physically affecting the function.



How does the ultrasound work?

Ultrasound sends sound waves into the body using a transducer, a hand-held device that sends and receives sound waves. For the exam, the sonographer will apply warm gel to your abdomen and place the transducer against your skin to take pictures. When the sound waves reflect back to the transducer from inside the body, an image is created on the screen. Ultrasound does NOT use radiation.

How should I prepare?

- You will need a full bladder at the time of the exam
- Wear loose-fitting clothing that is easy to take off and put on

How long will it take?

45 minutes

Why would my doctor order this?

- Evaluate a mass or cyst
- To determine kidney size and shape
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease
- Hematuria or blood in the urine
- Elevated creatinine
- Flank pain
- Kidney stones
- Other

What will happen during the exam?

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown so that the ultrasound gel does not get on your clothes. You will lie on your back or side while the sonographer applies the warm gel to your abdomen and move the transducer around to take pictures. He/she may ask you to hold your breath for 10-15 seconds at a time in order to help with the exam. The ultrasound is fairly easy and painless. If you are having abdominal pain, you may feel some discomfort during the exam, so please let the sonographer know if this occurs.

How will I get the results?

After all of the images are obtained, they are reviewed by a radiologist who specializes in ultrasound. They will send the results to your doctor who ordered the exam. In some cases, the radiologist may review the preliminary results with you after the exam is over.