

OB 2nd or 3rd Trimester Ultrasound

What is a 2nd or 3rd Trimester OB Ultrasound?

This exam is an ultrasound study of a fetus which is performed after the 14th week (4 months) of pregnancy. Pictures of your uterus, ovaries and the baby are taken. Measurements of the baby's head, abdomen, thigh bone and upper arm bone may be taken to determine fetal age, weight, or to show that the baby is growing appropriately.

Typically, your doctor will order an ultrasound when you are 20 weeks (5 months) along in order to evaluate the baby's anatomy. This ultrasound, call a fetal survey or sometimes a level 2 ultrasound, is a detailed exam where the sonographer will look at all parts of the baby including the heart, brain, fingers, and toes. This is the exam where you can find out the gender if you choose.

After 20 weeks, your doctor may request for another ultrasound to be done, and these exams are not as detailed as the fetal survey.



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 lower 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?

- There is no prep for this exam
- Make sure you use the restroom before coming back for your exam if you need to.
- We do not allow videotaping or pictures during the exam, but you will receive images of your baby after the exam.

How long will it take?

90 minutes for a 2nd trimester fetal survey
30-60 minutes for all other exams

What are some reasons a doctor may order an ultrasound?

- Dating
- Growth of the baby
- To check the amount of fluid around the baby
- To check the baby's position
- To look at the baby's anatomy
- Vaginal bleeding
- To look for the baby's heart beat
- Pelvic pain
- 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 while the sonographer applies warm gel to your lower abdomen and move the transducer around to take pictures. If necessary, we may perform a transvaginal ultrasound. This is a transducer that is inserted into your vagina. It allows for a better look at your cervix and placenta. The ultrasound is fairly easy and you should experience little to no pain. If you are having 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.