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Radiology Services

## Pelvic Ultrasound

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### Understanding Your Ultrasound

Your doctor has requested an ultrasound exam of your pelvis. A pelvic ultrasound will include an evaluation of your uterus, ovaries and adnexa (area around the ovaries). If you are in your first trimester (before 14 weeks) of pregnancy, the fetus will be evaluated. However, because of the early stage of gestation, this exam will not be a full study of the baby.

### What is ultrasound?

Medical ultrasound uses sound waves far above the range of normal human hearing. A beam of high frequency sound is passed into the body. The echoes or reflections are received and converted by the instrument into an image providing useful information about internal organs.

### How can a pelvic ultrasound help me?

Ultrasound is extremely useful in providing information about your uterus and ovaries. Your doctor may order an ultrasound to evaluate your pelvis for reasons such as pain, dysfunctional or irregular menstrual bleeding, or palpable mass. This exam does not involve radiation.

### How should I prepare for the exam?

You will need a FULL bladder for this exam. We recommend that you drink 32 to 48 ounces of a non-carbonated beverage one hour before the exam. If you are an inpatient or ER patient, a Foley catheter may be inserted, and we will fill your bladder manually. Doing so expedites your procedure and allows us to control the volume of your bladder.

### Before Your Exam

If you are an outpatient, please arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled time to register. Orders for your exam are needed to perform the procedure—**we cannot proceed without them**. Bring a copy of your insurance card. After you are registered in the business office, you will be directed to the Radiology Department.

### What will happen during the exam?

After entering the ultrasound corridor, you will be under the care of the sonographer—a specialist who performs the examination to produce ultrasonic images of internal organs. During the exam, the sonographer will make you as comfortable as possible.

You will be placed on a table or stretcher, and warm gel will be applied to your skin. The gel's purpose is to provide lubrication so that the transducer slides easily over the skin.

The sonographer then will begin the exam by passing the transducer over each area of the pelvis that needs to be evaluated. It will be necessary for the sonographer to apply pressure to visualize as clearly as possible. The sonographer will take measurements of various organs and look for abnormalities. If a pregnancy is visualized, appropriate measurements and observations will be noted.

After transabdominal images are taken with your bladder full, an endovaginal exam likely will be performed. With an empty bladder, a slender transducer is inserted into the vagina to evaluate the uterus and ovaries from a closer view. This exam is not performed if you are not sexually active or if you refuse. A gynecologic position similar to a Pap smear is required, but a speculum is not used. You will feel light pressure to acquire these images.

### How long does the exam take?

A pelvic ultrasound will take approximately one hour.

### Is it painful?

It may be uncomfortable if you already are in pain and/or because of a full bladder.

### Is ultrasound safe?

Ultrasound has been used for more than 25 years. A harmful effect has never been found in a human.

### How will I get the results?

The radiologist will review the images and may come into the room to scan also. He or she then will dictate your exam and give a report to your doctor to discuss with you.

*We hope you are pleased with the care you receive in the Radiology Department. Our goal is to give you the very best care and attention.*

*For more information, please call Patient Scheduling at (864) 455-7774 or visit [ghs.org/radiology](http://ghs.org/radiology).*