

Having an Ultrasound

This pamphlet can help you and your family understand what is going to happen and includes important information about eating and drinking before the ultrasound.

It is very important that you tell your child what to expect. Use simple language that he or she can understand.

What is an Ultrasound?

An ultrasound is a test that uses sound waves to look inside your child's body. A picture of what is being viewed shows on a TV screen.



What happens during an Ultrasound?

- This test does not hurt. There are no needles or tubes. It should take about 1 hour.
- Your child may wear their own clothes during the test (although some children may be asked to change clothes). You can stay with your child.
- The room will be dark with only a night light on.
- First, the technologist will put some warm jelly over the part of the body that the doctor wants to see.
- Then, they will move a smooth wand over that part of the body.
- It is very important that your child holds very still so that the picture is clear and not fuzzy. Getting your child to practice holding still can be helpful.

What happens during an Ultrasound?

For ultrasounds anywhere in the body other than the abdomen, kidneys/bladder, or pelvis:

- Your child can eat and drink normally.

For an ultrasound of the ABDOMEN:

- **Babies less than 8 weeks** should miss one feeding before the test.
- **Babies 8 weeks to 12 months** should have nothing to eat or drink for 4 hours before the test.
- **Babies over 12 months and children up to 4 years** should have nothing to eat or drink for 6 hours before the test.
- **Children over 4 years** should have nothing to eat or drink for 8 hours before the test.

For an ultrasound of the KIDNEYS AND BLADDER:

- Your child can eat normally.
- It is important to be well hydrated (drink often) so there is urine in the bladder for the ultrasound.
- Encourage your child to drink **CLEAR FLUIDS** such as water, juice (no pulp), lemonade, sports drinks (Gatorade), or Kool Aid. Please do not give your child soft drinks or pop, as these produce air which can get in the way of making good ultrasound images.
- Children **ages birth to 4 years** should drink normal amounts of clear fluids. If potty trained, encourage the child **not to pee** in the 1 hour before the ultrasound.
- Children **ages over 4 to 10 years** should drink normal amounts of clear fluids. They should **finish** drinking at least 1 glass of fluid, 1 hour before the ultrasound. The child should **not pee** in the 1 hour before the ultrasound.

- Children **ages over 10 years** should drink normal amounts of clear fluids. They should **finish** drinking at least 2 glasses of fluid, 1 hour before the ultrasound. The child should **not pee** in the 1 hour before the ultrasound.

For an ultrasound of the FEMALE PELVIS:

Your child must have a full bladder. Therefore:

- Your child needs to drink lots of fluids the day before the ultrasound so that your child is not dehydrated (dry).
- **Babies less than a year** should have 200-250ml of fluid (milk, formula, water or juice) one hour before the test. Please bring along extra bottles of fluids.
- **Older children** must drink large amounts of **CLEAR FLUIDS** such as water, juice (without pulp), lemonade, sports drinks (such as Gatorade) or Kool Aid. Your child should not drink soft drinks or pop, as these produce air which can get in the way of making good ultrasound images.
- Children **ages 1 to 10 years** of age should **finish** drinking 500-750 ml of fluid **1 hour** before the ultrasound. The child should **not pee** in the 1 hour before the ultrasound.
- Children from **10 to 18 years of age** should **finish** drinking 750ml-1L of fluid **90 minutes** before the ultrasound. The child should **not pee** in the 90 minutes before the ultrasound.

Please phone the Children's Hospital Ultrasound Department at (204) 787-4800 if you think your child will not be able to hold still during the test.

If you have any questions about what your child can eat or drink before the ultrasound, please phone the Ultrasound Department at (204) 787-4800.

For children whose ultrasounds were ordered through the Emergency Department:

Your test may be scheduled tomorrow, or possibly another day. In this case, you will be sent home and the Ultrasound Department will call you the next morning between 8 and 9 a.m. with an appointment time. Please make sure the Emergency Department has the right contact phone number for you. If you have not received a phone call by noon the next day, please return to Emergency to be checked again.

When you return for the appointment, you/your child will come to Emergency to re-register. When the Ultrasound Department is ready, you/your child will be sent for the test. After the test, you will return to Emergency to get the results. At any time, if you feel that your child's condition has worsened while waiting at home, you should go to the Children's Emergency earlier than your scheduled ultrasound appointment.

If this box is checked, please return to Children's Emergency tomorrow at _____ a.m. to be checked by one of our physicians, even if you receive a call about your ultrasound study for another time.

Next Review: September 2026