Emergency Responders Health Center
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PATIENT INFORMATION

Diagnostic Ultrasound Imaging

Frequently Asked Questions

What is diagnostic ultrasound imaging?

Diagnostic ultrasound imaging uses sound waves to create real-time images of internal organs, tissues, and blood vessels. It can help your medical provider evaluate symptoms, monitor a known condition, or investigate a finding from a previous exam. Ultrasound imaging is intended to support your medical care, but it does not replace a complete diagnostic evaluation or routine care with your medical provider.

What are the benefits of diagnostic ultrasound imaging?

Diagnostic ultrasound imaging is a widely used tool that can help identify findings that may benefit from further monitoring, evaluation, or treatment. Potential benefits may include:

- No radiation exposure
- Real-time images of organs, tissues, and blood flow
- Information that helps guide diagnosis and treatment planning
- A non-invasive exam that is generally well tolerated

What are the potential risks or limitations of ultrasound imaging?

Like all imaging exams, ultrasound has limitations. Ultrasound imaging may not detect every medical condition, and some findings may require additional evaluation to determine whether they are clinically significant.

Potential risks or limitations include:

- **False positives:** Results may flag an abnormality that is insignificant or benign. Not every finding detected will require treatment or affect overall health. A flagged finding that needs further evaluation may cause stress or anxiety.
- **False negatives:** Imaging may not detect every condition. A normal result does not guarantee the absence of disease.
- **Image and interpretive limitations:** Body size, shape, or positioning may reduce or affect image quality. Interpretation is based only on the images obtained, and findings may be less complete in some cases.

Is there a cost for diagnostic ultrasound imaging?

Diagnostic imaging services are billed to the patient's medical insurance first. Depending on your individual insurance plan, you may be responsible for deductibles, copays, coinsurance, or any portion of the cost not covered by your plan. If you have questions about your expected out-of-pocket cost, we recommend contacting your insurance provider or our billing office before your appointment.

How do I schedule a diagnostic ultrasound imaging appointment?

Most insurance plans require an order or referral from your medical provider before an ultrasound imaging exam can be scheduled and billed. If you have questions about whether an order is on file, please contact our office.

To schedule a diagnostic ultrasound imaging appointment:

- Call our office at (208) 366-5675 to speak with our ultrasound scheduling liaison and medical receptionist, who will assist you with any questions, and get you scheduled for your appointment.

How should I prepare for my appointment?

For all patients and appointments: Wear loose-fitting clothing. Female patients are advised to wear a sports bra for comfort and convenience. A water-soluble gel is used on the ultrasound transducer to capture images.

FASTING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABDOMINAL, PELVIC & VASCULAER ULTRASOUND EXAMS

FOR ALL PATIENTS:

Do not eat or drink anything for **6-8 hours** before your scheduled appointment, including coffee and other beverages.

FEMALE PATIENTS ONLY:

In addition to the fasting instructions above, drink **32 oz.** (1 liter) **of water** (non-carbonated) **1-hour before your appointment and arrive with a full bladder**.

This is **an exception to the fasting instructions above** and is required for the ovarian screening portion.

Consuming food or drinking beverages within 6-8 hours of your appointment (outside of instructions given to female patients) may cause images to appear unclear or inaccurate, which could affect the quality of the screening results.

For additional preparation details, please review the Ultrasound Exam Preparation Guide

How long does the appointment take?

Each appointment takes approximately 45-60 minutes, including check-in, a brief review with the ultrasound sonographers, and positioning for the imaging exams.

How will I receive my ultrasound results?

Results should typically be available through the ERHC patient portal (eClinicalWorks) within roughly 5-7 business days after the ultrasound exam, though timing can vary. Patients are encouraged to check their patient portal for their results; if you need assistance, please contact ERHC with any questions or concerns.

For additional information on how to access the patient portal, please review the Healow Patient Portal Resource

When will I review my results?

Your ultrasound imaging results will be reviewed by your ordering medical provider at a follow-up appointment. During that visit, your provider will go over your results, answer any questions, and discuss whether additional follow-up testing, monitoring, or referral is needed.

What happens if additional testing or referral is recommended?

If your medical provider determines that additional evaluation is needed, the provider will discuss the recommended next steps with you. This may include additional diagnostic imaging, specialist evaluation, laboratory testing, or other appropriate follow-up care.

Any additional testing or referrals will be submitted through the patient's personal insurance.

Who do I contact with questions about diagnostic ultrasound imaging?

Call (208) 366-5675. If no one is available to answer, please leave a voice message, and our ultrasound liaison will follow up with you as soon as they're able.

Who do I contact about my results, portal access, or follow-up care?

If you have additional questions about your results, or need assistance with accessing your patient portal, contact ERHC's main line at (208) 229-3742 to speak with a medical receptionist for assistance.