

What is a Breast Ultrasound?

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is a breast ultrasound?

Breast Ultrasound imaging, also called ultrasound scanning or sonography, is a method of obtaining images of the breast through the use of high frequency sound waves. The reflected sound waves are recorded and displayed as a real-time visual image. No radiation (x-ray) is involved in ultrasound imaging.



Source: www.radiologyinfo.org

A breast ultrasound may be ordered after a mammogram if there is an area on the breast that was not clearly visualized on the mammogram. Some images are seen more clearly on ultrasound versus a mammogram.

Are there any contradictions or safety issues to consider when having an ultrasound?

There are no harmful effects from routine ultrasounds.

How do I prepare for my Ultrasound?

- Check with your insurance company about reimbursement for this exam. Not all insurance companies cover routine breast ultrasounds. Remember to bring your insurance card the day of your exam.
- You should wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing for this procedure.
- Before your exam, tell the technologist if you are feeling any lumps or have noticed any changes since your last exam.
- Always try to obtain any prior mammograms or breast ultrasound exams that were completed elsewhere for comparison. Please bring these with you on the day of your exam.

How is the ultrasound performed?

Most ultrasound examinations are painless, fast, and easy.

- You will lie on your back on an examining table.
- The technologist or doctor will spread some warm gel on your skin and then move a hand held wand called a transducer, firmly against your breast, moving it until the desired images are captured.
- There may be varying degrees of pressure as the technologist guides the transducer over your breast.
- The radiologist (doctor) might also image your breast after reviewing the technologist's images.
- The examination usually takes less than 30 minutes.

In most instances, the radiologist will give you your results that day and a report will be sent to your doctor within 5 working days.

What are the limitations of Ultrasound?

Results of this test may vary. If this test is positive, it does not necessarily mean that you have cancer. Of all patients screened, a small percentage have breast biopsies ordered to determine if something seen on the images is or is not positive for cancer.

****If you feel a lump or notice a change in your breast, call your physician immediately, even if you have just recently had a negative mammogram or ultrasound.**

Source: Greenwich Hospital Breast Center Staff
Radiologyinfo.org

For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education

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