

Ultrasound: Kidney Transplant Exam

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains how to prepare for a kidney transplant ultrasound exam, how it works, what to expect, and how to get your results.

What is a kidney transplant ultrasound?

Ultrasound exams use sound waves to take pictures of the inside of your body. An ultrasound of a kidney transplant will study your transplanted kidney. This exam will show your kidney's overall blood flow. It will also check blood vessels – both the ones inside your kidney and the ones that connect the kidney to other parts of the body.

How does the exam work?

A *sonographer* (ultrasound technologist) will use a hand-held device that sends and receives sound waves. This device is called a *transducer*.

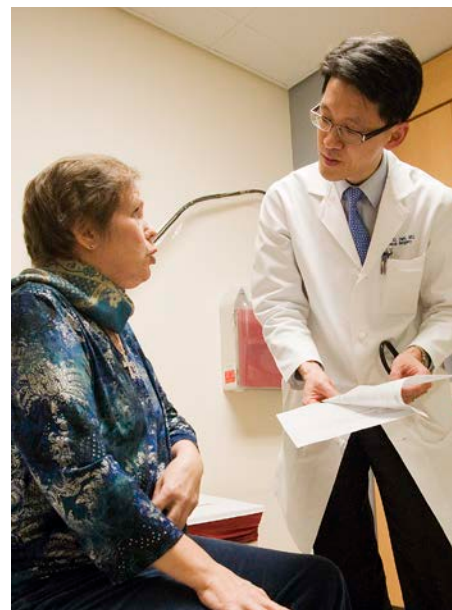
First, gel will be applied to your skin to help the transducer make contact. The sonographer will then press the transducer against your skin. As the sound waves bounce off your body's tissues, images are created. These images will appear on a computer monitor for your radiologist to see.

How should I prepare?

- Wear a loose-fitting, comfortable, 2-piece outfit. Only your abdomen needs to be exposed for this exam.

How is the exam done?

- You will lie on an exam table.
- The sonographer will move your clothing away from your abdomen.
- A warm gel will be applied to your abdomen.
- The sonographer will press the transducer against your skin and move it over your abdomen.
- If needed, the radiologist may take more pictures after the sonographer is done.



Talk with your transplant team if you have any questions about your transplanted kidney.

- If you are having a kidney biopsy, the doctor will remove a small tissue sample from your kidney and send it to the lab to be studied.

How long will the exam last?

- The ultrasound exam by itself usually lasts less than 30 minutes.
- A biopsy by itself usually takes 1 hour.
- If you are having a full ultrasound exam and a biopsy, you may be on the exam table for 60 to 90 minutes.

What will I feel during the exam?

- You will feel the sonographer apply warm gel to your abdomen and press the transducer against your skin.
- You may be asked to roll on your side or change positions.

What if I am also having a kidney biopsy?

If you are having a biopsy of your kidney:

- Ultrasound will be used before the biopsy to find a safe area of kidney to be sampled. It will also be used during the biopsy to guide the needle to the correct place.
- The biopsy will be done by a *nephrologist* (kidney specialist). You will have local anesthesia.
- After the biopsy, you will go to 4-South, the post-procedure unit in the hospital. You will stay there for 2 to 4 hours.

Who interprets the results of the exam and how do I get them?

The radiologist, who specializes in ultrasound, will review the images and send the report to your referring doctor. You will receive results from your doctor who ordered the test. Sometimes, the radiologist may talk with you about early findings when your exam is over.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Imaging Services:
206.598.6200