

Prenatal Ultrasound (Sonogram)

An ultrasound (also referred to as a sonogram) gives you one of the first opportunities you will have as a parent to bond with your new baby! While this is a fun and exciting experience, it is also an important medical exam performed to make sure that both the mother and baby are healthy. It is very important that you arrive on time for these appointments, as we need your full appointment time to do a complete exam.

DURING A NORMAL PREGNANCY, YOU WILL TYPICALLY HAVE AT LEAST TWO (2) ULTRASOUNDS.



1ST TRIMESTER

Your first ultrasound is usually performed around 8–12 weeks. The purpose of this ultrasound is to make sure that the pregnancy is in the right location and to measure the baby's size and heart rate. This ultrasound is performed before you see the doctor and may be done either on your abdomen or with a small wand inserted into the vagina.

The ultrasound is not painful, and the method that is used will be determined by the date of your last menstrual period. Your doctor will give you the approximate date your baby will arrive based on this ultrasound and your last menstrual period.



2ND TRIMESTER

At approximately 20 weeks, you will have a detailed ultrasound where a technician will take pictures of your baby's internal & external anatomy. This exam is performed on your abdomen and typically takes around 30 minutes. The technician will image your baby from top to bottom and take many measurements along the way. At this point, if baby is cooperative, the sex of the baby can be determined and that information will be shared with you if you would like to know. After the ultrasound is complete, your doctor will look at the images and go over results with you. This will give you a chance to ask any questions that you have about the baby or the exam.

Frequently asked questions about ultrasounds:

Can I record the ultrasound?

We are unable to allow any type of recording during the exam. This includes FaceTime and Skype. Your sonographer will give you a few keepsake photos of your baby on the day of the exam. We always try our best to get you great pictures of your baby, however sometimes the baby doesn't always cooperate with us, or other factors can interfere with how well we see the baby.

What information can the sonographer tell me?

The sonographer is allowed to tell you the baby's heart rate, how the baby is laying and whether it is a boy or girl and will point out what you are looking at throughout the exam. Questions regarding the health of your baby or whether specific parts of the baby look normal need to be directed to your doctor. Your doctor is specially trained to identify any potential problems and can answer any questions that you might have.

Who can come to my ultrasound?

We invite you to bring your family with you to share in this experience. Small groups of two to three people work best as the room needs to be quiet and free of distractions so that the sonographer can focus on the baby and communicate with the parents.

What if I don't want to know if it's a boy or girl?

We are required to take pictures of all of your baby's anatomy as part of your 20 week scan. If you choose to keep your baby's gender a surprise we will let you know when we are taking these pictures so that you can look away from the screen. It is generally a good idea to remind staff at each visit that you are keeping your baby's gender a surprise. You will also want to avoid reading your ultrasound reports in the **myHealth@SC patient portal** as the gender may be revealed in the report.

Your sonogram is a fun and important part of your prenatal care. We look forward to sharing this experience with you!

Will I get a 3D/4D ultrasound?

Our practice is AIUM accredited and we follow their guidelines which suggest that we use ultrasound only when necessary—this means 3D/4D ultrasounds for entertainment purposes are not performed in our office.

Can I bring my children with me to the ultrasound?

Siblings are allowed to attend the ultrasound but we ask that you bring another adult with you to help supervise them during the exam. Keep in mind that children under the age of 5 generally do not understand what they are seeing and sometimes become upset in the dark room. If your child becomes upset, we ask that someone please take them out of the room. Movies and video games are not permitted in the ultrasound room due to the noise and screen lighting being a distraction.

