

# frequently asked questions

July 12, 2013

## FETAL (OBSTETRICAL) ULTRASOUND

### What is ultrasound?

An ultrasound exam is a procedure that uses high-frequency sound waves to scan a woman's abdomen and pelvic cavity, creating a picture (sonogram) of the baby and placenta. A handheld device (transducer) sends sound waves as it moves across your abdomen and an image is visible on a special screen.

### When is it done?

An ultrasound exam is routinely done between 18 and 20 weeks, although your doctor or midwife may ask you to have ultrasounds done at other times during your pregnancy, as necessary.

### Why is it done?

Ultrasounds are performed during pregnancy, at the request of a patient's doctor or midwife, to assess the health and development of the fetus. An ultrasound exam helps determine important information about your baby, such as:

- Gestational age (how old your baby is)
- The size of your baby
- Where the baby and placenta are inside your uterus
- If you are carrying more than one baby
- How different parts of the baby are developing, such as the heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys, brain and spine

### Who pays for this test?

There is no charge to you for medically necessary ultrasound procedures.

### Can the sonographer give me results?

To ensure patients receive accurate information, our ultrasound technologists (sonographers) are not permitted to provide you with information about your baby at the time of the exam. A sonographer will perform the exam and a diagnostic radiologist will review the images and create a report, which will be sent to the referring physician or midwife.

### How can I find out the gender (sex) of my baby?

At the time of your 18-20 week ultrasound, a reasonable attempt to assess gender will be made by the sonographer and will be interpreted by a diagnostic radiologist and included on the final report to the referring doctor or midwife. It is important to know that gender predictions from an ultrasound are not 100% accurate. If you wish to find out the gender prediction from your exam, speak with your doctor or midwife at your next visit. The sonographer is not permitted to provide gender information at the time of the exam.