



Breast Ultrasound



What is Breast Ultrasound and what is it used for? Ultrasound is a non-invasive, painless and safe method to assist doctors to diagnose medical conditions. Mammograms are recommended for women to detect early stages of breast cancer although a woman or doctor during breast examination may detect a suspected abnormality. This might be a lump, soreness or nipple discharge.

Breasts are different, some with dense tissue as well as the glands, ducts and fatty tissue making it hard to see with mammography. Ultrasound imaging helps determine if a perceived abnormality is fluid filled, known as a benign cyst, or solid which could be a malignant tumour or a non-malignant lump of tissue.

MRI is more sensitive than ultrasound but it is not available to all women. An ultrasound is offered to women who are pregnant and cannot be exposed to X-Rays or to women who have a high risk for breast cancer or those who have members of their family who have suffered breast cancer.

If an ultrasound reveals any abnormality which seems suspicious then a doctor may perform an ultrasound guided biopsy.

How is an ultrasound performed? The patient is asked to lie on their back, sometimes with an arm raised over their head. A gel is applied to the area to be studied. The ultrasound works on sonic waves such as bats and other animals use to detect unseen objects.

The ultrasound probe is moved over the area while the radiographer views the pictures on a computer screen. A radiologist then views the pictures to determine results.

After the gel is wiped off, you may be asked to dress and wait for the images to be assessed. A radiologist may speak with you about the results or they may be sent to your doctor for further review.

Sometimes a follow-up examination may be necessary for further clarification or treatment.