

FACT SHEET

July 16, 2010

FETAL (OBSTETRICAL) ULTRASOUND

What is Ultrasound?

An ultrasound uses sound waves to show a picture of your baby and the placenta on a special TV screen. A handheld device (transducer) moves across your abdomen and sends the sound waves.

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 if it is 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. Ultrasound can give important information about your baby's health, such as:

- how old your baby is
- how your baby is growing
- 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 it?

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

Can the Sonographer tell me if I'm having a boy or girl?

The Ultrasound Technologist (Sonographer) will not be able to provide you any results of your scan, whether that concerns the gender of your baby, or any other matter. After your examination is performed, it will be read by a qualified Diagnostic Radiologist, who will give the results to your doctor or midwife. Under no circumstances are technologists permitted to give results to patients – please do not ask them to do so.

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

Determining whether your baby is a boy or girl is not part of the Diagnostic Ultrasound examination. There are private Ultrasound facilities in the community that can perform that service should you wish to know the gender of your baby.