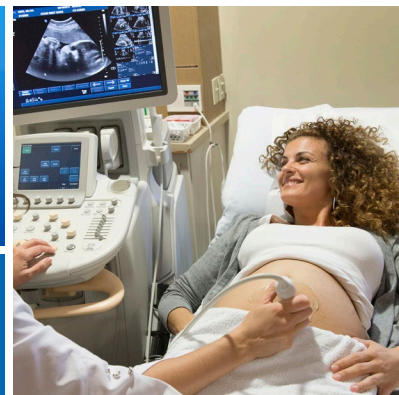


# Ultrasound during pregnancy

## What you need to know



You will soon have an obstetric ultrasonography scan, most often referred to simply as an “ultrasound”. This examination is used to follow the progress of your pregnancy and to determine when it began.

### What is the purpose of ultrasound during pregnancy?

Depending on the stage of the pregnancy, the purpose of ultrasound varies. In general, this examination is done to:

- > determine when the pregnancy began
- > see whether there is more than one fetus
- > observe and examine the fetus as a whole, to:
  - monitor its development
  - observe its limbs and organs
  - check that there are no malformations
  - see its movements
  - observe its environment
  - measure its vital signs (check for heartbeats)
  - if possible, to determine its sex, if you wish

### How is this examination done?

This examination is performed using an ultrasound device. A probe placed on your abdomen emits ultrasounds that are sent back to the probe after bouncing against the elements present in your abdomen. This produces images of the fetus.

Sometimes a probe is used that goes into the vagina. This is done to get closer to what the doctor wants to see. Your doctor may have asked for it to check the length of your cervix, for example. The probe is placed in a single-use plastic packaging. This is painless and safe for pregnancy.



### How long does an ultrasound take?

That depends on the observations to be made. Plan on a half-day altogether, as you will probably spend some time waiting.

## What are the risks associated with this examination?

There are no adverse reactions or complications associated with this examination. There is no discomfort.

## When do I need to have an ultrasound?

Most often, routine ultrasounds are done around the 12th and 22nd week of pregnancy. However, more ultrasounds may be required in some cases, such as if you have gestational diabetes or if the fetus is growing slowly.

Your health care team will give you more details about their purpose and when they should be done. You should then respect the timing recommended by your doctor.

## How do I prepare for the examination?

You should drink 250 ml (1 cup) of liquid one hour before the examination. **It is important not to urinate for 1 hour beforehand.** The filled bladder moves the fetus up into the abdomen and makes it easier to see during ultrasound.

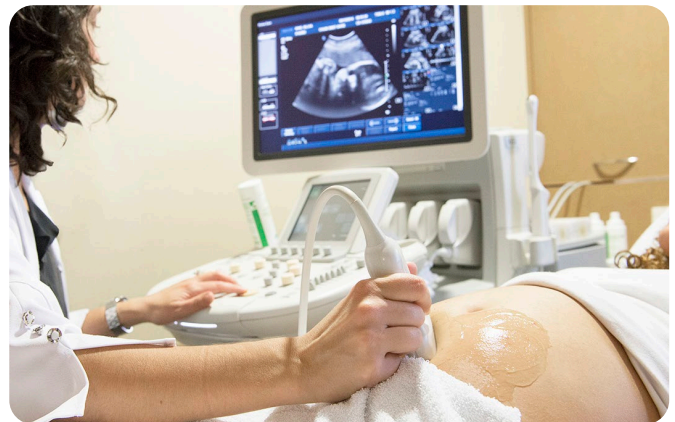
For this reason, we recommend that you arrive early. You can drink while waiting. If you have an unbearable urge to urinate, you can empty your bladder partially.

**There is no need to fast before an ultrasound.**

## What happens during an ultrasound?



A technologist spreads a gel on your abdomen to facilitate the transmission of ultrasound signals.



The technologist then passes the sensor-receptor over your abdomen.



The images are recorded in the ultrasound device.

## Where should I go, and when?

The ultrasound will be done in the CHUM Radiology Department. Someone from that department will call you within the coming week or two to give you the date and time of your appointment. If you were, exceptionally, asked to set up the appointment yourself, follow the instructions you were given.

Date: .....

Time: .....

Place: **CHUM**  
1051, Sanguinet Street  
Montréal, H2X 0C1  
3rd floor - Pavillon D  
Radiology: D0350

Tel.: **514 890-8450**

Bring to your appointment the **consult requisition** given to you by your doctor.

## Can I be accompanied?

The presence of **only one adult** is allowed. **Children are not allowed in the consultation room.**

Using a video camera or a camera is prohibited. You will be given an examination report and, if possible, photos of the fetus.



## What if I need to cancel or postpone my appointment?

Call the Radiology Department as soon as possible:

> **514 890-8450**



### USEFUL RESOURCES

To learn more about pregnancy, delivery, or follow-up care, visit our website.



Videos, other fact sheets, and more resources are available at:

[centredesnaissanceschum.com](http://centredesnaissanceschum.com)



### Questions


*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
[chumontreal.qc.ca](http://chumontreal.qc.ca)