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What is an ultrasound study?

An ultrasound study is a painless, non-invasive, radiation-free procedure used to visualize body structures and study blood flow. The ultrasound attempts to determine the cause of your symptoms by measuring the pressure and flow of blood using ultrasound waves.

CIS uses ultrasound to study arteries and veins in all parts of the body. Most ultrasounds use the same technology, but the procedure and results vary depending upon the part of the body being studied. This brochure will explain many of the different ultrasound procedures.

What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram (ECHO) is a simple ultrasound study that provides images of the heart, helping to determine its structure and functioning capacity. The study can last from 30 to 45 minutes.

Some of the things that an ECHO can help determine are the size of the heart chambers, the thickness of the heart muscle, and the movements of the heart valves. The strength of the heart muscle and the blood flow through the heart can also be evaluated. Abnormal masses, fluid around the heart and/or damaged portions of the heart muscle may be detected.

The ECHO uses color flow to provide information about the direction of blood flow within the heart. This is important in detecting leaking valves, valve blockages or stenosis, and diverted blood flow due to abnormalities.

An ECHO also uses Doppler to measure the velocity of blood flow at specific sites in the heart.

What does a carotid ultrasound examine?

The carotid arteries are located in the neck and bring oxygen-filled blood to the brain. Severe blockages in these arteries can cause a TIA (small stroke) or CVA (large stroke).

The carotid ultrasound evaluates the amount of blockage (if any) in the carotid arteries. It is also used after carotid surgery or stenting to monitor blood flow in the arteries.

This study requires approximately 30 minutes to complete.

How is a vascular ultrasound different?

The vascular ultrasound evaluates the blood flow in the arms and/or legs, veins and/or arteries. There are many types of vascular ultrasound procedures and the test ordered for you depends upon the type of symptoms that you are experiencing.

Blockages in the leg, also known as peripheral artery disease (PAD), are the leading cause of amputation in the nation. The vascular ultrasound is used to detect these and other blockages in the extremities. This ultrasound is also used to monitor blockages that have been previously treated with balloon angioplasty (PTA) or stent.

This study can last from 30 to 60 minutes.

What does a renal ultrasound check?

The renal ultrasound checks for blockages in the renal arteries that supply blood to the kidneys. When the renal arteries are blocked and blood flow to the kidneys is decreased, the body's natural defense forces the blood pressure in the entire body to elevate and become difficult to manage. A renal ultrasound can also measure the size of both kidneys. Decreasing kidney size sometimes indicates shrinkage due to limited blood flow.

Blockages that have been previously treated by balloon angioplasty (PTA) or stent may also be monitored by the renal ultrasound.

The renal ultrasound takes about an hour to complete. Fasting is required to produce clearer images. You will be given specific instructions about fasting before your procedure.

What does an abdominal aorta ultrasound detect?

The aorta is the large vessel in the middle of the body that distributes blood from the heart to all areas of the body. It is necessary for the pressure in the aorta to be very high to transport blood all the way to the fingers and toes. This pressure can weaken the wall of the aorta over time. The weakened portion of the wall can enlarge or balloon. This weak spot is called an aneurysm and may leak or rupture causing internal bleeding and/or death.

The abdominal aorta ultrasound can detect aneurysms as well as blockages in the lower portion of the aorta, below the diaphragm. It can



Your Guide To: *Ultrasound*



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also be used to check the aorta after repair.

This ultrasound lasts about 30 minutes. Fasting is required to produce clearer images. You will be given specific instructions about fasting before your procedure.