

## Diagnostic Imaging Department

# ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND

### What is an ultrasound examination?

Ultrasound is high frequency sound waves (inaudible to the human ear). This can be transmitted through the body from an ultrasound probe and pictures produced from the echoes or reflections of the sound from the internal body tissues.

Clear gel, hopefully warmed, will be applied to the skin over the area to be examined. This helps transmit the sound through the skin. The gel is water soluble, washes off easily and will not stain clothing. The ultrasound probe, which is a small, smooth hand-held instrument, is run over the skin to produce pictures on a screen.

The examination is not painful, although some gentle pressure may need to be applied to the skin through the probe in certain circumstances.

The examination will take, on average, 10 – 20 minutes and there are no side or after effects.

### What do I have to do?

#### 1. Clear fluids only for 6 hours

Eating food within 6 hours prior to your examination will prevent adequate visualisation of some abdominal organs, particularly the gallbladder. Please do not eat anything and drink only clear fluids (water or fruit juice preferably) for the 6 hours before your examination.

If you are diabetic and unsure of your diet in preparation for this examination, please consult your GP.

#### 2. Clothing

The examination requires contact of the ultrasound probe to the skin over the area to be examined. Easy and adequate access to the pelvis and abdominal area helps both the speed and quality of the examination obtained. We suggest you wear loose fitting clothes and avoid multiple layers of clothing/one piece underwear/corsets/slips/braces/belts, etc.