



Abdominal Aortic Ultrasound Preparation & Information

What is an abdominal aortic ultrasound?

An ultrasound of the abdominal aorta is a non-invasive, painless test that uses high-frequency sound waves to image the "aorta," the main blood vessel leading away from the heart. When the walls of the abdominal aorta become weak, they may balloon outward. If the aorta reaches over 3 centimeters in diameter, it is then called an abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA). As the aneurysm gets larger, the risk of rupture increases.

Before the Test

You should not eat or drink anything except noncarbonated water for eight to 12 hours prior to the test. You may take your usual medications on the day of the test, unless your doctor instructs you otherwise.

During the Test

You will be asked to lie quietly on an examination table while the technologist moves an instrument called a transducer over your abdomen. To obtain clear images of your blood vessels, the technologist may apply moderate pressure to your abdomen. During the Doppler portion of the exam, you will be able to hear your blood flow and your heartbeat. The resulting images are recorded and stored in your medical record. The test is approximately 30 minutes.

After the Test

After the procedure you may leave without restrictions, including the ability to resume your normal activities immediately.

