



Sonography or Ultrasound ©2004

Sonography, also called ultrasound, can be performed during pregnancy for evaluation of fetal structure. An ultrasound scan is a diagnostic technique which uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of the internal organs. A screening ultrasound is sometimes done during the course of a pregnancy to check normal fetal growth and verify the due date. Ultrasounds may be performed at various times throughout pregnancy for different reasons.

Although the specific details of each procedure vary slightly, generally, ultrasounds follow this process. Two types of ultrasounds can be performed during pregnancy:

- **abdominal ultrasound**

In an abdominal ultrasound, gel is applied to the abdomen and the ultrasound transducer glides over the gel on the abdomen to create the image.

- **transvaginal ultrasound**

In a transvaginal ultrasound, a smaller ultrasound transducer is inserted into the vagina and rests against the back of the vagina to create an image. A transvaginal ultrasound produces a sharper image and is often used in early pregnancy.

An ultrasound can rule out some major structural birth defects (i.e. congenital heart malformations, renal anomalies, cranial defects). However, some birth defects are not visible on ultrasound. A normal ultrasound does not guarantee a normal baby.