

# ULTRASOUND AND YOUR GROWING BABY

We are so pleased that you've chosen Independence Health System OB/GYN as your provider for obstetrical care! Please continue to read for details on our available ultrasound services.

Ultrasound (or Sonogram) uses high frequency sound waves and a monitor to show your developing baby inside the womb (uterus). Ultrasound is safe for you and your growing baby when performed by a trained certified technologist. Ultrasound has been an integral part of prenatal care for over 30 years and has been found to pose no risk for mom or baby. Most uncomplicated, normal pregnancies, will have 3 ultrasound exams, one in each trimester of your pregnancy.

Together, our OB/GYN technicians have over 30 combined years of experience evaluating developing babies in the womb and are accredited by the American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM). Not all facilities and technicians have this experience, expertise and accolades. When you're ready for your fetal ultrasound, please be sure to schedule at one of our physician preferred offices.

## Our Independence Health System OB/GYN Offices with Prenatal Ultrasound Exams Available:

**Greensburg Office | 870 Weatherwood Lane, Suite 3, Greensburg, PA 15601**  
T: (724) 850-3150

**Scottdale Office | 109 Crossroads Roads, Suite 202, Route 119, Scottdale, PA 15683**  
T: (724) 850-3150

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester Ultrasound – Seeing Baby for the First Time!

Most first trimester ultrasound exams are performed when baby is about 8 weeks old (¼-½ inch big). This is a transvaginal exam, and for a successful exam, an empty bladder is highly recommended. You will be positioned on an exam table and asked to lie on your back with your feet in the stirrups. Next, a thin transducer will be inserted into the vagina. It is normal to experience a little pressure during the insertion.



### During the ultrasound exam your technician will be looking to find:

- ✓ How many babies are you expecting?
- ✓ Is baby in a gestational sac inside the uterus?
- ✓ Does baby have a heart beat?
- ✓ Does Mom's last menstrual cycle coincide with how big baby is measuring? This will help to confirm baby's due date.
- ✓ Your uterus and ovaries will also be checked to make sure they look healthy as well.

**This exam typically takes less than 10 minutes and these will be the very first pictures of your baby!**

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Ultrasound – The Detailed Anatomy Ultrasound

This is perhaps the most anticipated of all ultrasounds during a woman's pregnancy. This exam is typically done when baby is about 20 weeks old. Mom can finally put a face to the flutters and movements she's beginning to feel. The prep for this exam is for Mom to have a very full bladder.

The fluid in mom's bladder helps to highlight baby, making him/her easier to see. It's also recommended to refrain from stimulants like caffeine & sugar the day of this exam as these tend to put baby in "exercise mode". Keep in mind, it's the ultrasound technicians' job to evaluate your babies' growing vital organs which are very small. It is important for baby to be as still as possible.

Sometimes, due to baby's position or activity level, the technician may not be able to see everything that must be evaluated. If that happens, a follow-up ultrasound may be necessary. Additional follow up ultrasounds may need to be performed at a tertiary maternity center nearby.



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## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester Ultrasound – How Big is Baby & is Baby "Head Down"

It's been about 3 months since you've last seen your growing and developing baby. How much does he/she weigh? Is he/she in the right position for delivery? These are important questions for mom and dad, but also for your doctors. The 3rd trimester ultrasound is typically done when baby is between 34-36 weeks old. The prep for this exam is the same as the 2nd trimester exam, **mom needs a full bladder and should limit caffeine and sugar the day of the exam.**

Sometimes during pregnancy, it's necessary to have more than the typical 3 ultrasounds. Mom may develop gestational diabetes or high blood pressure, baby may have a single umbilical artery cord or may be measuring too small. In cases such as these, you may need to have weekly antenatal testing called a Biophysical Profile Ultrasound.

This ultrasound is done on top of the belly, the same as the 2nd and 3rd trimester exams. But there's 2 very big differences. 1) mom doesn't need a full bladder every time & mom should eat or drink (diet permitting) whatever makes baby active. The technician will need to observe 30 seconds of baby practicing to breath. We also want him/her awake and active.

