

# Ultrasound Examination of the Prostate: What to Expect

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## What is a prostate ultrasound?

Ultrasound imaging uses soundwaves to create pictures of the inside of the body. A hand held device called a transducer (also called a probe or wand) sends and receives these soundwaves.

An ultrasound of the prostate is typically used to look at the prostate gland and seminal vesicles. This type of ultrasound is done by placing the transducer inside the rectum (part

of the large intestine closest to the anus). This is called a *transrectal prostate ultrasound*. A transrectal ultrasound takes a clearer picture because the probe is closer to the prostate gland. The exam typically takes less than 15 minutes.

<p><b>Prostate gland:</b> surrounds the part of the urethra (the tube that empties the bladder) just below the bladder, and produces a fluid that forms part of the semen.</p>
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<p><b>Seminal vesicles:</b> A pair of glands in the pelvis that help produce semen.</p>
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## How should I prepare?

In order to get the best and clearest images for this test please use a water enema. You can purchase a Fleet saline enema kit at any pharmacy for a few dollars. Follow the package directions and use 30 minutes before your ultrasound appointment. You can do the enema in a private restroom on the day of your appointment or you may use it at home within 1 hour of your appointment.

## What happens during the exam?

1. The sonographer will verify that you completed the enema and ask a few questions about your medical history related to the

exam. The interpreting radiologist will use this information for interpreting the ultrasound.

2. We will give you privacy to undress below the waist and put on a gown and we will provide a sheet as a cover as you lay on a padded table.
3. You will be asked to lie on your left side, knees bent forward. Once you are in a comfortable position the sonographer will perform the ultrasound exam.
4. The sonographer will pull away the covering over your buttocks and locate the rectal opening. They will then insert the transrectal transducer a short distance into the rectum. There will be cold lubricant jelly on the tip of the transducer for comfort and to improve the image quality.
5. It is helpful to breathe deeply and slowly during insertion to relax the surrounding muscles. You will feel pressure from the transducer and possibly the urge to push but continued breathing will help you to resist.
6. The sonographer has to move the transducer up and down, side to side in small increments with varying degrees of pressure in order to view the entire gland and surrounding area. They will communicate with you during the ultrasound exam to assess your comfort level.
7. At the end of the exam, the sonographer reviews the images for completeness. They may return to obtain more images to complement the original images.

<b>Sonographer:</b> a clinician who specializes in ultrasound technology
<b>Radiologist:</b> doctor with special training in creating and interpreting pictures of the inside of the body

### **What are the benefits and risks?**

A transrectal ultrasound is used to make medical decisions about your current condition or symptoms. There are no common risks from this ultrasound.

## **Who will give me my results?**

A radiologist who specializes in ultrasound will evaluate your pictures and send a report to your medical provider. You will receive your ultrasound results from your ordering provider. The sonographer is not a doctor and cannot interpret the images or provide results.

## **How is the transducer cleaned?**

The transrectal ultrasound transducer is cleaned and disinfected after every use with High-Level disinfecting methods. Before rectal insertion, the transducer is covered with a latex (or non-latex for allergies) sleeve.

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