

ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM SCREENING

OVERVIEW: For this test, the sonographer examines the abdominal aorta. An Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA), a specific kind of aneurysm, is a condition in which the lining of the blood vessel called the aorta is enlarged within the abdomen. Abdominal aortic aneurysms pose a threat because they are usually silent until a medical emergency occurs.

The abdominal aorta is the largest blood vessel in the body and the main artery that originates in the heart. As the lining weakens from age and other risk factors, the vessel wall thins and expands. The most common location for an AAA is between where the aorta divides to supply blood to the kidneys and where it divides to supply blood to the pelvis and legs.

A painless, non-invasive procedure, an abdominal aortic aneurysm screening requires the patient to lie on their back while a sonographer takes images and measurements of their abdominal aorta.

PREPARATION: For this exam, the patient needs to fast for four hours prior to the screening. The patient should take an antacid 30 minutes prior to the exam.

This test can rule out and diagnose an abdominal aortic aneurysm and atherosclerosis that can lead to a critical stenosis (narrowing or blockage of the vessel lumen). In addition, this test can rule out and diagnose a number of other problems such as (not limited to):

- Intense back or abdominal pain
- Pulsatile abdominal mass
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Genetic factors
- Gender (males have a higher risk)

The reason for the test will depend on your symptoms. Many people with abdominal aortic aneurysm do not experience symptoms; but, the above list are some of the most common warning signs.

THIS ULTRASOUND WILL TAKE ABOUT 20-30 MINUTES AND THE REPORT WILL BE BACK TO YOUR ORDERING PHYSICIAN WITHIN 24-48 HOURS.