

RENAL ARTERY ULTRASOUND

What is it?

A renal ultrasound uses sound waves to create images of the kidneys and its surrounding blood vessels. This test is used to detect kidney abnormalities and to assess blood flow to the kidneys.

These tests are generally used to detect for renal artery stenosis or the narrowing and hardening of renal arteries. This specific type of atherosclerosis causes impaired kidney function and hypertension. Patients at risk for these conditions are: patients with diabetes or smokers.

Who needs it?

- Patients with the following conditions may need a renal artery ultrasound:
 - Acute Renal Failure
 - New-onset hypertension
 - Refractory (resistant) hypertension
 - Abdominal bruit heard by physician
 - Pulmonary edema
 - Small kidneys
 - After intervention

What to expect before, during, and after?

Before	For morning appointments: Do not eat food or drink liquids after midnight the night before. For noon/after appointments: Do not eat food or drink liquids 6 hours prior to your exam. Do not smoke or chew gum prior to the exam as this will increase stomach gas.
During	The renal artery ultrasound is a painless and non-invasive test. Typically performed by a technician, you will be asked to lie on an exam table with your shirt pulled up. He will maneuver the transducer over the skin of your abdomen and take pictures or images for your physician to see. There may be varying degrees of discomfort from pressure as the technologist guides the transducer over the body, especially if you are required to have a full bladder for the exam.
After	The doctor will provide you with results and recommendations for prevention and/or treatment right after completion of the test. Unless otherwise specified, you may resume normal activities and normal diet.

Are there any risks I should be aware of?

No risks are associated with this test. The sound waves are harmless and the gel is easily removed off your skin.