

WHAT IS AN ULTRASOUND OF THE THYROID?

An ultrasound of the thyroid produces pictures of the thyroid gland and the adjacent structures in the neck. The thyroid gland makes the thyroid hormone, which helps to regulate a variety of body functions including how fast the heart beats. It is very common for patchy areas or nodules to develop in the thyroid that may or may not be felt on the skin surface. Ultrasound is very sensitive and shows many nodules that cannot be felt.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You will lie on the exam table face up. A clear water-based gel is applied to the area of the body being studied to help the transducer (ultrasound probe) make secure contact with the body and eliminate air pockets between the transducer and the skin that can block the sound waves from passing into your body. The ultrasound technologist then presses the transducer firmly against the skin in various locations, sweeping over the area of interest or angling the sound beam from a farther location to see an area of concern better. Images are captured on a monitor and later reviewed by the radiologist.

The scan takes approximately 30 minutes.

HOW TO PREPARE

Follow these guidelines:

- You may be asked to remove some or all of your clothes and change into a hospital gown.

RESULTS

A radiologist will review your images and send a report to your doctor who ordered the test in 48 hours. You'll get a call from your doctor's office to discuss the results and next steps. To check your results in our secure, online patient portal, My UNC Chart, visit www.myuncchart.org.