

## **Ultrasound (US)**

### **What is an ultrasound?**

An ultrasound is a non-invasive test that uses sound waves to create images of the structures inside the body. The sound wave “bounces off” the various structures and back to the probe, providing information for a picture on the screen. It is most commonly known for its use during pregnancy to produce images of the developing baby, but it is also a very effective and non-invasive way to provide information about muscle, joint, and nerve structure and injury.



### **What is an ultrasound used for in patients with peripheral nerve problems?**

Ultrasounds are very useful in providing information about the size and structure of nerves, ligaments, and tendons. They can show injury, swelling, and presence of cysts and masses. It is also a useful tool to assist in guiding the needle for procedures such as injections and nerve blocks.

### **How is an ultrasound done?**

An ultrasound is done by placing a smooth probe on the skin surface which sends sound waves into the area being evaluated to produce an image on a computer screen. A gel is usually first applied to the skin to increase the contact with the skin and probe for a clearer image. If the ultrasound is being used to provide the image guidance for an injection procedure, the needle is generally placed near the site being imaged to allow its direction to be seen on the screen.

### **What do I do before and after the test?**

There is no prep for a musculoskeletal ultrasound but you should avoid wearing clothing or jewelry that covers the area being studied. There is also no recovery for an ultrasound since the test itself is not invasive. If the ultrasound was used as part of another procedure, such as an injection, follow the instructions provided to you for that procedure.