



IMAGING DECISIONS

Prenatal Ultrasound: Uses, Benefits, and Questions

A balanced overview of why ultrasound may be offered, what it can and cannot show, and how referrals work.

Public education only. This guide is not a diagnosis, medical order, emergency service, or substitute for individualized consent and clinical assessment.

What ultrasound is

- Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to create images. It does not use ionizing radiation.
- Julia does not perform ultrasound. When imaging is chosen or clinically indicated, she refers you to an appropriately trained provider.

Why it may be offered

- Estimate gestational age and due date, especially when dates are uncertain.
- Confirm the number of fetuses and assess location, anatomy, growth, fetal position, placental location, and amniotic fluid.
- Evaluate a specific symptom or clinical finding, or support monitoring later in pregnancy when additional information may change care.

Benefits and limits

- Ultrasound can provide information that supports planning and informed decisions, but it cannot identify every condition or guarantee a particular outcome.
- Results sometimes lead to additional imaging, consultation, or uncertainty. Ask how a finding would change your options before the exam.

Safety and prudent use

- Diagnostic ultrasound has a long safety record when used prudently by trained professionals.
- Ultrasound energy can produce small thermal or mechanical effects, so professional organizations recommend medically appropriate use and discourage extra exposure solely for non-medical keepsake imaging.
- Discuss the reason, expected information, alternatives, and how results will be used in your care plan.

Important: This resource is educational and is not an imaging order or consent form. Decisions belong in a private conversation with your care team.



Further reading

- [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists - Ultrasound Exams](#)
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration - Ultrasound Imaging](#)

Questions for your next visit

Use the space below to write questions, preferences, or details you want to discuss privately with your care team.
