

Ultrasound - Ascites Evaluation

PURPOSE:

To evaluate the abdomen and pelvis for ascites.

SCOPE:

Applies to all relevant abdominal ultrasound studies performed in Imaging Services / Radiology

INDICATIONS:

- Signs, symptoms, or other imaging studies suggestive of ascites
- Conditions associated with ascites e.g., liver diseases; renal diseases; heart diseases
- Follow up of known ascites

CONTRAINDICATIONS:

No absolute contraindications

EQUIPMENT:

Curved or linear transducer with a frequency range of approximately 2-9 MHz that allows for appropriate penetration and resolution depending on patient's body habitus

PATIENT PREPARATION:

- None

EXAMINATION:

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

A complete examination includes evaluation of the abdomen and pelvis for free or loculated fluid

EXAM INITIATION:

- Introduce yourself to the patient
- Verify patient identity using patient name and DOB
- Explain test
- Obtain patient history including symptoms. Enter and store data page
- Place patient in supine position

TECHNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS:

- Evaluate RUQ with attention to fluid peripheral to the liver and in the subhepatic space and hepatorenal recess
- Evaluate LUQ with attention to fluid peripheral to the spleen
- Evaluate RLQ and LLQ for fluid in the paracolic gutters
- Evaluate midline pelvis for pelvic free fluid
- Document the extent and location of any fluid identified, measuring the deepest vertical pocket of fluid in each quadrant without intervening bowel or viscera
- Provide stationary cine images to show mobility of debris, if present

DOCUMENTATION:

- Transverse images:
 - RUQ, with depth measurement
 - LUQ, with depth measurement
 - RLQ, with depth measurement
 - LLQ, with depth measurement
 - Midline pelvis
- Stationary cine images of mobile debris, if present
- Images of septations, if present
- Data page(s)

PROCESSING:

- Review examination images and data
- Export all images to PACS
- Document relevant history and any study limitations

REFERENCES:

ACR-AIUM Practice Guideline (Revised 2007)

The American College of Radiology (acr.org) (Revised 2023)

Ascites Index – an attempt to objectify the assessment of ascites - PMC (nih.gov)

REVISION HISTORY:

STATUS	NAME & TITLE	DATE	BRIEF SUMMARY
Submission	David Fetzer, MD, Director	11/15/15	Submitted
Approval	David Fetzer, MD, Director	11/15/15	Approved
Reviewed	Kanupriya Vijay, MD	10/25/18	
Revision(s):		12/11/19	Removed notes about skin marking (service no longer provided). Reduced required images to TRV only.
		2/12/20	Corrected discrepancy between sections
Submitted Approved	Skye Smola RDMS, RVT David T. Fetzer, MD	7/26/24	Removed required grayscale images w/o measurement
Submitted	Jocelyn Melendez, RDMS, RVT	7/26/24	Added images of proper ascites pocket measurements and added references

Appendix:

Helpful Images:

