WHAT IS ULTRASOUND?
Ultrasound is an easy and noninvasive way to see internal structures of the body. It sends high-frequency sound waves through the skin and produces images of major organs. In an obstetrical examination, the baby can be observed inside the mother’s uterus.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE AN ULTRASOUND EXAM?
The most common reasons for having an ultrasound exam are to determine the approximate age and position of the baby and to make sure the baby is growing normally.
Age can be determined early in the pregnancy by measuring the length of the baby. Later, age is determined by measurements of the head and femur, the long bone inside the thigh. Measurements of the abdominal and head circumference are also determined.
Ultrasound provides information about the amount of fluid surrounding the baby, the placenta, and the placenta’s position.
Early in pregnancy, it may be necessary to scan with a special transducer placed in the vagina to see the baby.

PREPARATION:
Drink 3 to 4 8-ounce glasses of water at least one hour before the exam and do not urinate until the exam is completed. The reason for this is that high-frequency sound waves used in ultrasound travel well through liquid but not through gas or air. Since the uterus is located in the pelvis behind loops of bowel containing gas and air, it is important in early pregnancy to fill the bladder with fluid to displace the bowel and provide a clear window for viewing the baby.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
An average ultrasound takes 20 minutes to an hour depending on the number of weeks of gestation.

FOLLOW-UP:
The results of you exam will be sent to your doctor. Use of transvaginal probe before 12 weeks may be used to see fetus better – bladder would be emptied for this test.

OUTPATIENT REGISTRATION:
Please arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. Park in the Mercy Medical Center Parking Ramp, located at the corner of 8th Street and 8th Avenue SE. You must register PRIOR to your procedure. Upon entering the hospital, proceed to Ground (G) level and follow the signs to “Registration.” After 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or on the weekends, proceed to Ground (G) level and follow the signs to the “Emergency Department” and register there. After registering, follow the signs to “Radiology (X-Ray)”, also located on Ground (G) level.

Your appointment date and time: __________________________________________