**Carotid Ultrasound**

Carotid ultrasound is a diagnostic procedure that uses sound waves and is an excellent method of seeing what is going on inside the body. It is used to diagnose carotid artery stenosis, a condition where narrowing of the carotid arteries (located on both sides of the neck) may partially or completely block blood flow from the heart to the neck and head. Ultrasound produces better images of certain "soft" tissues than x-rays do. Ultrasound can also show internal motion such as blood flowing through veins and arteries. It does not involve the use of x-rays and provides information without the risk of surgery. It can also help indicate if surgery is needed.

The actual test varies in time. A gel is applied to the side(s) of your neck being viewed. A wand will be moved in a circular motion on your neck and images are then viewed on a screen. You will be able to resume normal activity following the test, unless otherwise instructed.

To prepare for the test:

* Do not have caffeine or cigarettes one hour prior to the test.
* Take your usual medications.
* Eat your normal meals.