Carotid Ultrasound

What is a Carotid Ultrasound?
Ultrasound imaging, or sonography, uses sound waves to produce pictures of the inside of the body. Ultrasound exams do not use radiation. Ultrasound images are captured in real time so they can show the structure and movement of the body’s internal organs, as well as blood flowing through blood vessels. This exam looks at the carotid arteries located on either side of the neck. It is almost always performed bilaterally.

CPT Code
93880 bilateral

Indications
Stenosis, hematoma, dissection, high blood pressure, carotid bruit, follow-up screening exam.

Contraindications
None.

How Does The Patient Prepare?
No preparation is required prior to the exam.

What Happens During the Test?
The technologist will obtain a medical history. The patient will be scanned lying face up. The technologist (sonographer) will apply a clear gel to the neck. The sonographer or radiologist then presses a small, hand-held device called a transducer against the skin and sweeps it back and forth over the neck. The exam measures and analyzes blood flow patterns in the carotid arteries. The images are readily available to the sonographer. The exam takes approximately 60 minutes to complete.

After the Test
After the exam, the gel is wiped off. The patient may resume normal activities.

The Results
A radiologist will analyze the images and send a signed report to the referring physician within one business day.

(Information adapted from www.radiologyinfo.org and Dr. Jill Westercamp)

This information is intended for use as merely a guideline for referring physicians and their staff members only. It contains information pertaining to the most commonly ordered exams and indications. However, Shawnee Mission Medical Center Radiology does not recommend any particular examination. Individual radiologist preference or patient circumstances may dictate ordering alternative studies. Although contrast codes are not needed to place an order, the following contrast codes may be used in placing orders:
CT Contrast Q9967, MRI contrast A9577 and A9579.