Dopplar Ultrasound on Your Liver

December 6, 2013 By Karen Hoyt

Dopplar Ultrasound on Your Liver can find cysts, tumors, and keep you from vomiting blood if you have esophageal varices from portal hypertension. The ultrasound may be one of the first diagnostic procedures that your doctor will perform after you are diagnosed with Hepatitis C or Cirrhosis. It shows the size, condition, and the shape of your liver, spleen, gall bladder, and other organs. It is a quick way to look for any tumors on the liver. It also shows the direction that your blood is flowing in the arteries of your liver. This is important in diagnosing portal valve hypertension. It goes pretty quickly, but can give your doctor a lot of imformation.

It was scheduled along with everything else within weeks of my first hospitalization. One of the reasons that I like this particular test is because I can stay awake, and it is fast and painless. One of the things that I do NOT like is that is can show that my portal vein in my liver is blocked. I am having one done tomorrow.

I like to say it though. Dopplar Sonography just sounds cool. It sounds like a term that an Oklahoma weatherman might use. During a severe weather alert, the television will show pictures of the sweeping radar. The multi-colored images reveal exactly what is happening inside the clouds. Green means rain, yellow is heavier rain. The red images are what we pay attention to though. It means a cloud contains the stuff that tornados are made of. If the red dot is centered over your area, you can bet on high winds and possibly hail. When it is shaped like a little hook, it is time to hit the 'fraidy hole. When you live in Tornado Alley, you know Dopplar. In a nutshell, it measures velocity using microwave signals.

When my transplant doctor asks for a Dopplar of my abdomen, I show up. Most of the time, they do not want you to have food after midnight the night before. If you have eaten, be sure and tell the tech because your gall bladder and other organs look very different if you are processing food. If the vein flow is red, that means the blood is going into and through your liver in the southward bound direction. (I am sounding like a weatherman now) Flowing south is perfect! If it is blue, then the blood is flowing back up toward your stomach, esophagus, and heart. Run for cover!

It is a quick procedure. I put on my little peek a boo gown and lie down on the table. Sometimes they let me keep my clothes on. I try and wear a loose fitting shirt for easier access. The technician comes in and stands beside me. The screen is usually at an angle where I can see it if I crane my neck. You know I do. I did not know what it all meant the first time. Now, I am a self proclaimed expert. That's right. I'm a legend in my own mind.

The tech lays a towel on my tummy and lifts my gown or shirt to begin rubbing her gadget along my ribcage. It is not uncomfortable. But I am taking shallow breaths and my mind is racing. It’s like they know you are tense. They tell you how and when to breath. On command, I hold my breath and let it out, turn to the left and then the right. All the while the little gadget is skating around on a sticky gel all over my abdomen. I hear continuous clicking sounds as pictures are being taken and measurements are being recorded.

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