

# ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND

Abdominal ultrasound can be a useful tool in diagnosing abnormalities of the organs inside the abdomen. It uses high frequency sound waves to image soft tissue structures in 2D.

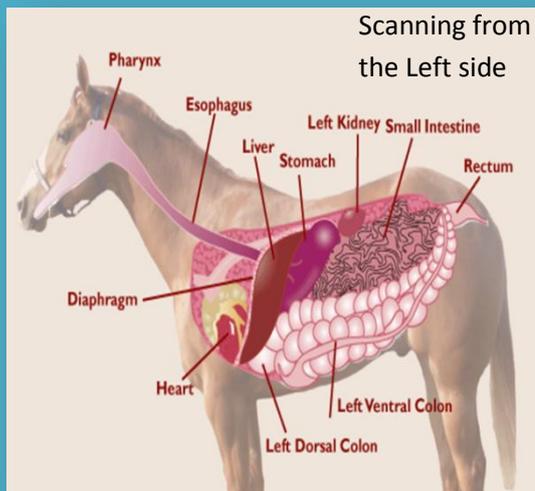
Our view depends on the frequency of the ultrasound waves. In horses we are unable to scan the complete depth of the abdomen; with the probes available to us we can expect to get a good view of about 25-30 cm depth at any point on the scan.

This can give us useful information to supplement our clinical exam. Conditions where we might use it include weight loss, colic, colitis (diarrhoea), peritonitis (infection in the abdomen), abdominal abscesses, cancer, or liver disease.

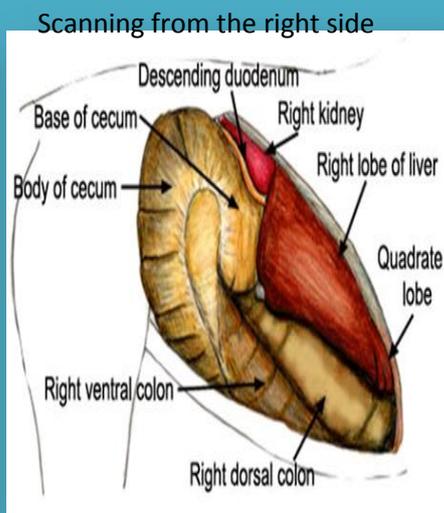
We can see:

- The thickness of the bowel wall, movement of the intestines, and cross sectional area of portions of small intestine.
- Stomach size and wall thickness.
- Vessels associated with the intestines.
- Liver size and consistency.
- The spleen.
- The diaphragm.
- The amount of fluid around the intestines.
- The kidneys.
- The bladder.





Scanning from the Left side



Scanning from the right side



We can use a rectal probe to examine other areas of the abdomen. These include:

- The bladder.
- Female reproductive organs (used most commonly for reproductive work).
- Male accessory organs.
- Some areas of intestine.

We may also use ultrasound to guide us when we take abdominal samples. We can sample the fluid around the intestines or take guided needle biopsies of the liver or other organs.

We may use it in foals to diagnose conditions such as umbilical infections, patent urachus (link from the bladder to the umbilicus) or bladder rupture.

We perform abdominal ultrasound most commonly in the clinic alongside other tests. We do have a mobile unit however, and can scan horses at your yard.



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