

Up Close and Personal: Baby in Real Time

Nancy Saraiva

One are the days when you'd stare at a grainy ultrasound image of your baby pre-term and try to distinguish his elbow from his knee. Today, technology has made it possible to not only see your baby clearly in womb, but also in real-time, when baby might be yawning, stretching or sucking his thumb.

With Greig Associates' "My 3D Ultrasound," parents can view their unborn child three-dimensionally through a digital ultrasound image made up of a volume of sound echoes. The concept is fairly new in Canada, but with an experienced technologist, the images can leave you blown away.

"It's a fun experience that really connects parents with baby," shares Jill Anglin, head sonographer at Greig Associates. "Mounted on the wall is a large flat-screen TV for watching the entire 3D scanning session. The experience is profound for parents, and they are amazed by the details. Really, it's like getting to know their baby in utero."

Typically, the 3D ultrasound is done sometime between 24 and 32 weeks gestation, and there is no measuring of those tiny arms or feet, or confirmation of the due date as with a medical ultrasound.

"It's non-diagnostic, and does not replace the medically indicated routine ultrasound done at 18 weeks of pregnancy," says Anglin. "But you get to see the baby's heartbeat, and perhaps, one of the biggest highlights is seeing baby's face close-up. You might catch baby pursing his lips, yawning or smiling, or even discover just whose nose he has. And if requested, and baby is positioned just right, you can find out the sex."

You also walk away with a CD of still images and video clips, two printed pictures and two months of interactive Web hosting—to share all those pictures with friends and family.

Appointment times take approximately 30 minutes in a relaxed and comfortable environment, and no preparation is required. The cost for the experience and the photos: \$199.



As for the safety aspects, ultrasound has been used in obstetrics since the 1950s, and according to the Greig Associates' Web site, there have been no confirmed adverse biological effects to mothers or their babies caused by exposure from ultrasound instruments. But, of course, this is a personal decision that each family must make and research for themselves.

"The quality of the 3D images will also depend on the skill of the technologist and the quality of the ultrasound machine," says Anglin. "Our ultrasound technologists are all registered with the American Registry of Medical Diagnostic Sonographers, and they are thoroughly experienced in obstetrical ultrasound scanning."

For more information or to book an appointment, visit my3dultrasound.com.

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