



GP guide to the imaging of patients with upper abdominal signs and symptoms

Ultrasound is the first-choice investigation for a range of clinical conditions, including liver cirrhosis, pancreatitis, gall bladder disease and liver masses.

Referral Guidelines

Presenting Complaint	Imaging Guidance
Abnormal liver function test	In patients with abnormal liver function tests, ultrasound may show increased liver size, haemangiomas, cirrhosis, and gall bladder or bile duct disease. Abdominal MRI or CT may provide additional clinical information.
Jaundice	Ultrasound reliably differentiates between obstructive and non-obstructive jaundice, but bile duct dilation may be subtle in early obstruction. Abdominal MRI or CT may provide additional clinical information.
Pain in upper abdomen, suggestive of gall stones or pancreatitis	Ultrasound is the investigation of choice to show or exclude gall stones and acute cholecystitis. MR cholangio-pancreatography (MRCP) may be of value to provide a better view of the common bile duct.
Enlarged liver or gall bladder	Ultrasound may show increased liver size, haemangiomas, cirrhosis, and gall stones or bile duct disease. Abdominal MRI or CT may provide additional clinical information..

NB: all upper abdominal scans will include an assessment of the abdominal aorta.

How do I refer a patient?

To refer a patient for an ultrasound complete one of our referral forms available from our website (www.inhealthgroup.com).

References

iRefer. Royal College of Radiologists. 7th edition, 2012.

Right test, right time, right place; a Framework for Primary Care Access to Imaging. Royal College of Radiologists and Royal College of General Practitioners, 2006.

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