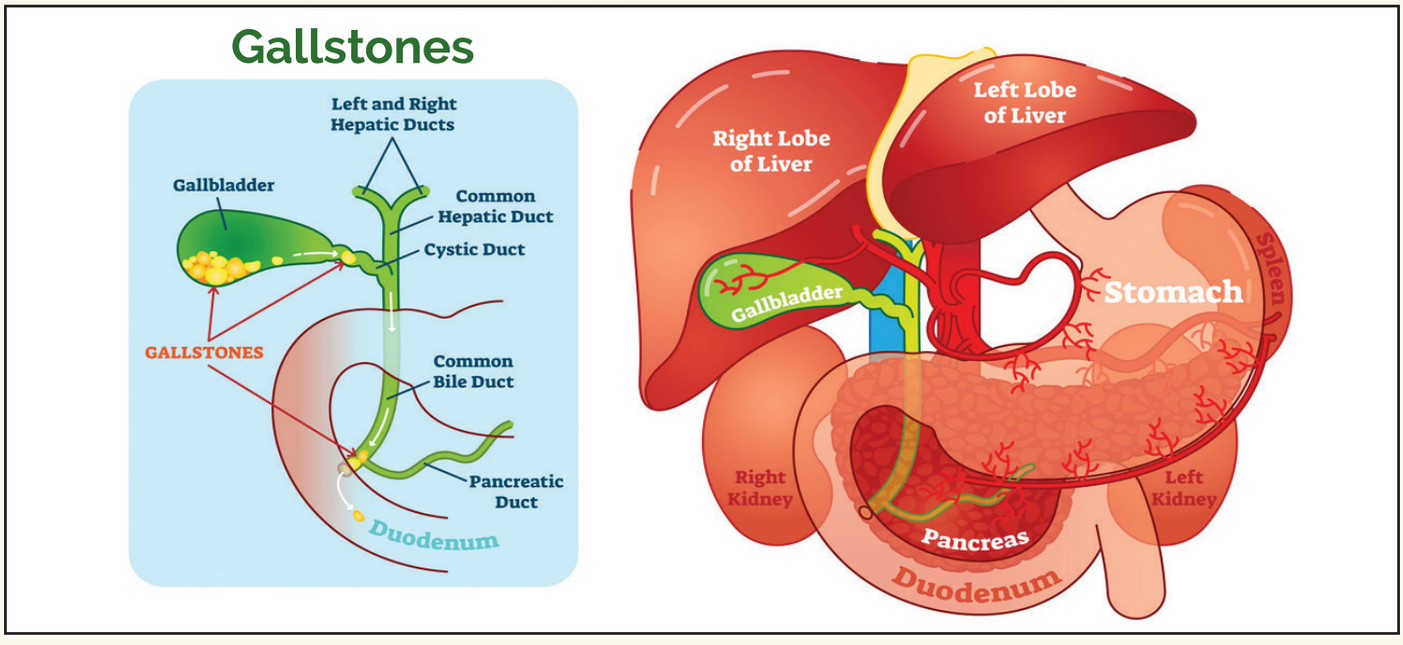
Abdominal Ultrasound:

An abdominal ultrasound is done to view structures inside the abdomen. It's the preferred screening method for an abdominal aortic aneurysm, a weakened, bulging spot in the abdominal aorta — the major blood vessel that supplies blood to the body. However, the imaging test may be used to diagnose or rule out many other health conditions.

Doctors recommend an abdominal ultrasound to screen for an abdominal aortic aneurysm in men ages 65 to 75 who are current or former cigarette smokers. If you've never smoked, abdominal aortic aneurysm screening isn't recommended for men (or women), unless your doctor suspects you may have an aneurysm or if you have a family history of an aneurysm.



Why it's done

An abdominal ultrasound can help your doctor see many organs in your abdomen. Your doctor may recommend this test if you have a problem in any of these body areas:

- Blood vessels in the abdomen
- Intestines
- Liver
- Spleen
- Gallbladder
- Kidneys
- Pancreas

An abdominal ultrasound can help your doctor evaluate the cause of stomach pain or bloating. It can help check for kidney stones, liver disease, tumors and many other conditions.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Details

The screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is painless and non-invasive. An abdominal screening is conducted while the participant lays on their back and the technician uses ultrasound to take images and measurements of your abdominal aorta. Screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm is conducted with a painless ultrasound examination of the belly, when the technician will take measurements of the abdominal aorta to look for any abnormalities that might require further examination.

Warning Signs of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

- Intense back or abdominal pain
- Rapid pulse
- Nausea and vomiting
- Excessive sweating
- Shock

Risk Factors for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Emphysema
- Genetic factors
- Gender (males have a higher risk)

Source: Mayo Clinic Staff