

# RUQ/ABDOMINAL LIMITED ULTRASOUND PROTOCOL

**BILLING CODE:** UABDL 76705

**TO BE USED FOR:** RUQ or HCC screening exams

**PATIENT PREP:** NPO at least 4 hours. Exceptions can be made for urgent and ER exams. Include in the report that the patient was not NPO for exam when relevant.

**\*\*A more limited, focused exam may be done for the area of concern only in the following circumstances:**  
*(If this occurs, billing code to be used is still UABDL)*

- Inpatient: If other imaging has been performed within last 72 hours, a limited area of concern ultrasound may be done as long as there are no other findings mentioned in the report that should be evaluated. Examples: Eval renal mass, eval for cholecystitis, eval for Portal HTN with recent abdominal ultrasound.
- ER Patient: Perform full protocol unless report specifically states "Limited Abd to Eval xxx"
- Outpatient: Perform full protocol regardless of recent prior imaging

**\*\*HCC Screening:** LIRADS to be reported when screening for HCC in patients with cirrhosis, NASH, MASLD, MASH or other forms of chronic hepatitis. In addition, the following images should be added:

- Linear images of the capsule of LHL to show degree of nodularity.
- Splenic volume with measurements in 3 dimensions.
- LIRADS should be completed in Viewpoint report. See additional info for LIRADS below.

**\*\*When rule out cholecystitis is requested, or patient is being seen for RUQ pain and has findings suspicious for cholecystitis, the following should be added to the exam:**

- Cystic artery (add billing code UORGDL)
- GB length measurement

**\*\*Organ donor and recipient screenings:** See Complete Abdomen Protocol

**\*\*If a patient is coming in for pain, document within the indication section what the current status of pain is. For instance, how long the patient has had pain, if it's getting worse or better, and where exactly the pain is. Always take an image where the patient is hurting the most, labeled as area of pain. When describing the pain, write "per patient, ..." in the indication. Example: Per the patient, his pain is now in the RLQ and getting worse.**

**\*\*"Not well seen" to be stated if structure is not able to be completely evaluated. Include the reason why in relevant section of the report.**

**\*\*Any masses, cysts, stones or abnormalities should be measured in three dimensions and have a 2D picture and a color image documented. MFI should be routinely used to evaluate perfusion and low flow structures as needed. Measure the 2 largest or most worrisome masses/cysts in any given structure and comment on the presence of additional if relevant.**

**\*\*Cine clips to be added as needed for any abnormality seen.**

# IMAGES TO OBTAIN

## PANCREAS:

- Transverse images showing head, body and tail.
- Sagittal image of head, body and tail.
- Document and measure pancreatic duct if visible.
- Take image of "Pancreas Area" if not well seen.

## LIVER:

### Left lobe – subcostal/epigastric approach

- Sagittal images:
  - Left lobe with left portal vein and ligamentum teres.
  - Left lobe with hepatic vein.
  - Cine clip sweeping through LHL in sagittal from medial to lateral.
- Transverse images:
  - Left lobe visualizing dome of liver.
  - Left hepatic vein confluence into IVC.
  - Left lobe with left portal vein.
  - Cine clip sweeping through LHL in transverse from superior to inferior.

### Caudate lobe – subcostal/epigastric approach

- Sagittal image of the caudate lobe.
- Transverse image of the caudate lobe.

### Right lobe - subcostal or intercostal approach

- Sagittal images:
  - Right hemidiaphragm to assess for pleural effusions and ringdown.
  - Right lobe and right portal vein.
  - Main interlobar fissure with gallbladder and CHD and MPV
  - Right lobe showing echo texture between liver and right kidney.
  - Right lobe and right kidney documenting approximate liver size. Measurement of length of the liver is not needed unless requested.
  - Cine clip sweeping through RHL in sagittal from lateral to medial.
- Transverse images:
  - Right lobe to visualize dome of liver.
  - Right liver with right and middle hepatic vein draining into IVC.
  - Right lobe at right portal vein.
  - Right lobe and right kidney.
  - Cine clip sweeping through RHL in transverse from superior to inferior.

### Main Portal Vein:

- 2D image through MPV
- COLOR image of MPV showing patency and direction of flow

*NOTE: If lateral edge or dome of liver is not seen in its entirety with patient in supine position, turn patient in LLD or raise head of bed and repeat RHL cine clips to visualize better.*

## LIVER CAPSULE - HCC SCREENING ONLY

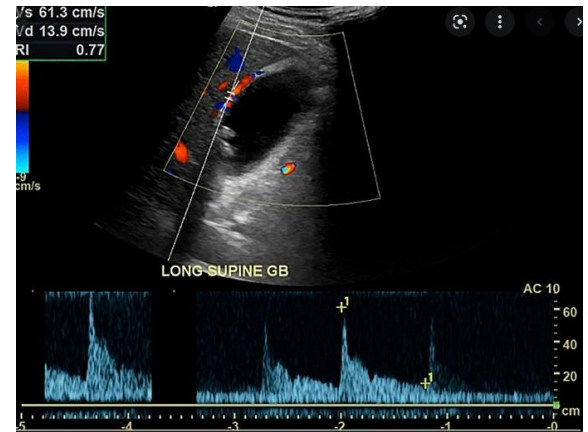
- Image of contour of liver capsule taken with linear transducer to assess for nodularity, preferably of the left lobe.

## BILE DUCTS:

- Sagittal image of CBD and CHD with measurements at the level of the porta hepatis. Color Doppler should be used to distinguish ducts from vessels.
- If dilated, follow CBD as distal as possible to look for stones/mass and measure as distal as possible as well.
- Document and measure any intrahepatic bile duct dilatation with 2D and color imaging.

## GALLBLADDER

- Sagittal image of gallbladder.
- Transverse image of gallbladder.
- Measurement of gallbladder wall in sagittal section only. Do not include liver surface. If liver edge is edematous, try to measure free GB wall. Normal wall thickness is <3mm.
- Take image and cine through GB if there is any abnormality (stones, polyp, adenomyomatosis.) Take color image of any mass seen.
- LLD POSITION: Transverse and sagittal image of gallbladder with patient in LLD position to check for stones/polyps and mobility.
- If evaluating for cholecystitis, or if suspicious GB findings such as thickened wall or distension:
  - Evaluate for Murphy's sign and include in report.
  - Gallbladder length measurement. Normal <8cm
  - Color Doppler of gallbladder wall to assess for hypervascularity
  - Spectral Doppler velocity of the cystic artery which can be seen within wall of anterior gallbladder.
    - Normal velocity <40cm/s
    - If artery cannot be visualized, include color Doppler of area and comment in report that it could not be seen.
    - Add code UORGDL if cystic artery is sampled.



## RIGHT KIDNEY:

- Sagittal image of right kidney in medial, middle, and lateral views.
- Sagittal measurement of right kidney.
- Transverse images of superior, mid, inferior right kidney.
- **IF RENAL STONES ARE PRESENT:**
  - Measure renal stones in one largest dimension.
  - Demonstrate acoustic shadowing if possible.
  - Image with color to look for twinkle (can still be a stone if no twinkle shows).
- **IF HYDRONEPHROSIS, PELVIECTASIS, OR DILATED URETER PRESENT:**
  - Demonstrate hydronephrosis or pelvictasis with a color image of the renal pelvis if present.
  - Patient should void bladder and images should be taken to reassess degree of dilation with 2D and color images.

### **SPLEEN: HCC SCREENING ONLY**

- Sagittal and transverse images through spleen
- Splenic volume with measurements in 3 dimensions.
- Sagittal image through left hemidiaphragm and spleen to assess for pleural effusions and ringdown.
- Compare echotexture between spleen and left kidney.
- Color Doppler image of any abnormality.

### **LOWER QUADRANTS:**

- Document RLQ and LLQ to assess for ascites

## **ADDITIONAL IMAGES TO OBTAIN AS NEEDED**

### **AREA OF PAIN:**

- Additional images in the area of pain using the curvilinear or linear transducer as need. Label images "Area of pain."

**HCC SCREENING:** LIRADS to be reported when screening for HCC in patients with cirrhosis, NASH, MASLD, MASH or other forms of chronic hepatitis. In addition, the following images should be added:

- Image of contour of liver capsule taken with linear transducer to assess for nodularity, preferably of the left lobe.
- Spleen volume and 2D images.
- LI-RADS: Viewpoint report should include the following LI-RADS statements:

*NOTE: If lateral edge or dome of liver is not seen in its entirety with patient in supine position, turn patient in LLD or raise head of bed and repeat RHL cine clips to visualize better.*

1. LI-RADS visualization score:

VIS-A: no or minimal limitations

- A. limitations if any present are unlikely to affect sensitivity
- B. example: liver completely or near completely visualized, with little beam attenuation/shadowing

VIS-B: moderate limitations

- C. limitations that may obscure small (<10 mm) observations
- D. example: moderate beam attenuation with some portions of liver or diaphragm not visualized

VIS-C: severe limitations

- E. limitations that significantly limits detection of observations
- F. example: severe beam attenuation with most (>50%) of either liver lobe not visualized

2. LI-RADS observation description -Any mass seen should be referred to as an "observation" in the report with a description of the appearance. Do not label with the term mass. If it is clearly a cyst, it is okay to use the word "cystic."

### **REPORTING EXAMPLE FOR LIVER SECTION WITH LIRADS:**

**LIVER:**

Normal size, normal shape and contour, increased echogenicity.

LI-RADS visualization score: VIS-A: no or minimal limitations

LI-RADS observations:

1- Hypoechoic observation in LHL measuring 0.7 x 0.8 x 0.9 cm

2- Cystic/anechoic observation in LHL measuring 1.0 x 1.2 x 1.0 cm

## LIMITED ABDOMINAL ULTRASOUND IMAGE LIST RUQ AND HCC SCREENING

IMAGE	MODE
Panc Trans H/B/T	2D
Panc Sag H/B/T	2D
<i>Panc Duct if dilated</i>	<i>2D +</i>
Left Liver Sag (medial portion)	2D
Left Liver Sag (lateral portion)	2D
Left Liver Sag M-L	Cine
Caudate Liver Sag	2D
Caudate Liver Trans	2D
Left Liver Trans (at hepatic vein)	2D
Left Liver Trans (at portal vein)	2D
Left Liver Trans S-I	Cine
Right Liver Trans (at hepatic veins)	2D
Right Liver Trans (at portal vein)	2D
Right Liver Trans at RK	2D
Right Liver Trans S-I	Cine
Right Liver Sag/Rt Chest	2D
Right Liver Sag	2D
Right Liver Sag / RK	2D
Right Liver Sag L-M	Cine
<i>Extra RHL sweeps in LLD or with head of bed elevated if needed</i>	<i>Cine</i>
MPV	2D
MPV w/ color	Color
GB Sag	
GB Wall w/measurement	2D+
GB Sag w/ color	Color
GB Trans	2D
GB Sag LLD	2D
GB Trans LLD	2D
<i>If to rule out cholecystitis:</i> <i>GB length</i> <i>Cystic duct</i>	<i>2D+</i> <i>Spectral</i>
CHD w/measurement and color	Color+
CBD w/measurement and color	Color+

IMAGE	MODE
Right Kidney Sag Mid	2D
Right Kidney Sag Mid w/ measurement	2D +
Right Kidney Sag Med	2D
Right Kidney Sag Lat	2D
Right Kidney Trans Sup	2D
Right Kidney Trans Mid	2D
Right Kidney Trans Inf	2D
<i>If hydro:</i> <i>Color Doppler images</i> <i>Post Void images</i>	<i>Color</i> <i>2D</i>
RLQ	2D
LLQ	2D
<i>For cirrhosis or HCC screening:</i> <i>Spleen Sag</i> <i>Spleen Trans</i> <i>Spleen Volume</i> <i>Liver capsule</i> <i>LI-RADS in report</i>	<i>2D</i> <i>2D</i> <i>2D +</i> <i>Linear</i>
<i>MFI for lesions</i>	<i>MFI</i>

## ABDOMINAL LIMITED PROTOCOL HISTORY

	Date	Changes made	By whom
Updated	07/09/21		Becky Marion
Updated	10/6/22	ADDED: -Limited exam section when prior imaging within 72 hours -Cine clips of liver -LHL image w LHV -LI-RADS section -Cystic artery and gblength for R/O chole cases and RUQ pain w suspicious GB findings REMOVED: -TRV IVC image	Protocol Meeting 10/6 <b>Attendees:</b> Manjiri Dighe Shaun Bornemeier Dalene Edden Katie Toth Becky Marion Renee Betit Fitz
Updated	6/1/2023	-CHANGED: Linear and LIRADS to be done for rule out cirrhosis cases as well as HCC -ADDED: LIRADS - If it is clearly a cyst, it is okay to use the word "cystic." -ADDED: MFI should be used to evaluate perfusion and low flow structures as needed on a routine basis. -CHANGED: Measure the 2 largest or most worrisome masses/cysts in any given structure and comment on the presence of additional if relevant. (No longer 3) -CHANGED: Multiple images with and without color and calipers no longer needed of CBD/CHD	Protocol Meeting <b>Attendees:</b> Manjiri Dighe Shaun Bornemeier Katie Toth Becky Marion Renee Betit Fitz
Added	4/15/2024	Image List added	Renee Betit Fitzgerald
Reviewed	5/23/2024	Added: NOTE: If lateral edge or dome of liver is not seen in its entirety with patient in supine position, turn patient in LLD or raise head of bed and repeat RHL cine clips to visualize better.  Updated LIRADS visualization scores	Protocol Meeting <b>Attendees:</b> Manjiri Dighe Dalene Edden Becky Marion Renee Betit Fitz
Changed	2/28/2025	For HCC screening – report splenic volume and measure in 3 dimensions	Protocol Meeting <b>Attendees:</b> M Dighe, M Dhyani Dalene Edden, Becky Marion Renee Betit Fitz
Unofficial Review	11/6/2025	Used for Nov Exam of Focus. Typos corrected.	Renee Betit Fitzgerald
Added	11/26/2025	Added NASH, MASLD, MASH and other chronic hepatitis to HCC screening description	Manjiri Dighe Renee Betit Fitzgerald