Musculoskeletal (MSK) ultrasound is a rapidly evolving modality that provides dynamic and noninvasive imaging, which aids in the evaluation and management of joint and soft tissue disorders. It provides imaging of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and soft tissue.

How is the exam performed?
For most ultrasound exams of the musculoskeletal (MSK) system, the patient is seated on an examination table or a chair. For some ultrasound exams the patient is positioned lying face-up on an examination table that can be tilted or moved.

A clear water-based gel is applied to the area of the body being studied to help the transducer make secure contact with the body and eliminate air pockets between the transducer and the skin. The ultrasound technologist then presses the transducer firmly against the skin in various locations, sweeping over the area of interest or angling the sound beam from a farther location to better see an area of concern.

An MSK ultrasound examination is usually completed within 15-30 minutes.

What are the benefits?
- Most ultrasound scanning is noninvasive (no needles or injections) and is usually painless.
- Ultrasound is widely available, easy-to-use and less expensive than other imaging methods.
- Ultrasound imaging does not use any ionizing radiation.
- Ultrasound scanning gives a clear picture of soft tissues that do not show up well on X-ray images.
- Ultrasound provides real-time imaging, making it ideal for dynamic studies (i.e. diagnosis of bicep tendon dislocation).
- Unlike the strong magnetic field of MRI, ultrasound is not affected by cardiac pacemakers, ferromagnetic implants or fragments within the body.
- Ultrasound is excellent for imaging superficial structures such as small joints, small lumps and bumps and superficial tendons.

Are there any risks or limitations?
For standard MSK ultrasound there are no known harmful effects. However, ultrasound does have difficulty penetrating bone and therefore can only see the outer surface of bony structures and not what lies within. For visualizing internal structure of bones or certain joints, other imaging modalities such as MRI are typically used.

For more information or to schedule an exam, please contact Centralized Scheduling at (520) 733-7226 or visit www.radltd.com.