

# FDA Cautions Against Ultrasound 'Keepsake' Images

*By Carol Rados*

It's risky business taking pictures of unborn babies when there's no medical need to do so. That's the word from the Food and Drug Administration, which is concerned about companies trying to turn an important medical procedure into a prenatal portrait tool.

Facilities with captivating names such as Fetal Fotos, Peek-a-Boo, Womb with a View, and Baby Insight are popping up in strip malls and shopping centers all over the country. And they're promoting "keepsake videos" that use the latest ultrasound technology to produce high-resolution three-dimensional and four-dimensional (moving) images showing the surface anatomy of babies developing in the womb. The lure of this burgeoning industry is that parents-to-be get to see characteristics like facial features, hair, and even the baby's sex, and often they can count fingers and toes before their baby is born. Some women even have videos made at various stages of their baby's growth. And the videos are often being marketed as a prized addition to collections of childhood memorabilia.

As compelling as these sneak previews may be, the FDA is warning women about the potential hazards of getting keepsake videos. The agency also is warning companies against creating them for entertainment purposes. While ultrasound has been around for many years, expectant women and their families need to know that the long-term effects of repeated ultrasound exposures on the fetus are not fully known. In light of all that remains unknown, having a prenatal ultrasound for non-medical reasons is not a good idea....

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