

Sialogram

Radiology Department Patient information

Introduction

The radiology (X-ray) department has received a request for you to have a sialogram from your doctor.

This leaflet provides information and advice for patients and carers about having a sialogram. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. We will also send you an appointment letter with a date and time for your examination. Please make sure you check this to make sure you attend the correct hospital site.

What is a sialogram?

A sialogram is an x-ray investigation of the salivary glands. It looks in detail at the drainage pathways of the larger salivary glands. These are called the parotid and submandibular glands. The salivary glands drain saliva into your mouth through small ducts (tubes). The parotid duct opens on the inside of the cheek next to the upper back teeth on both sides of the mouth. The submandibular duct opens on the inside of the mouth under the tongue - immediately behind the lower front teeth. To allow the salivary gland ducts to show on the x-ray images, a special x-ray dye called 'contrast medium' will be used.

What is contrast?

Contrast medium is a colourless liquid which contains iodine. It shows up on x-rays because of the iodine contained within it. The contrast is injected directly into your salivary ducts via a tiny tube placed by the practitioner performing the examination. Any contrast medium that is absorbed into your bloodstream will be processed by your kidneys and leave the body in your urine. You will not see any change in your urine. Most of the contrast used in a sialogram is not absorbed and drains back into the mouth when the investigation has finished. There is a very small chance of a mild allergic reaction to the contrast. Staff are very experienced in spotting and treating any reaction and will ask you about any previous experience with contrast medium before starting the examination.

Is there an alternative examination?

You may have already had an ultrasound scan of your salivary glands. A sialogram is often also requested to provide a more thorough examination of your anatomy. An MRI scan can sometimes help with your diagnosis. However, a sialogram is considered the most appropriate test for you.

Am I required to make any special preparations?

No, you are not required to make any special preparations. You may eat, drink and continue to take any medication prior to your sialogram. If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Radiology Department. Please inform the Radiology Department if you have had a similar x-ray recently.

If you are diabetic

Please contact the radiology department.

If you are pregnant

If you are pregnant, or may be pregnant, it is essential that you notify the department in advance. You may not be able to have this examination and alternative investigations may require consideration by your referring doctor.

Can I bring a relative/friend?

Yes, but for reasons of safety they will not be able to accompany you into the examination room.

What will happen when I arrive for my sialogram?

You should go to the reception desk in the main Radiology Department. There you will be shown where to wait before being collected by a member of radiology staff. You may require some dental x-rays before your sialogram. If these are needed you will be directed to the Dental Department so the dental x-rays can be taken before your sialogram procedure. You will not need to change for the examination.

What happens during the examination?

You will be taken into the x-ray room. You will be introduced to the team looking after you. The procedure will be explained to you. A brief history will be taken. We will check for any allergies. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions.

You will be asked to lie on the x-ray table, the practitioner may then squirt a small amount of a solution like lemon juice into your mouth to make you salivate. They will then pass a very small plastic tube into the duct of the salivary gland under investigation. The tube is blunt and (remove therefore) not painful. Once the tube is in the correct position you may be asked to hold it with your teeth. X-ray contrast will be injected through the tube into the salivary gland. This takes a few minutes and x-ray images will then be taken. The tube is then removed.

Will it be uncomfortable?

You may experience some discomfort in your salivary gland as the x-ray contrast is injected. The discomfort may resemble when you have a flare up of your salivary gland / duct symptoms.

How long will it take?

We advise you allow up to two hours for your examination. It usually takes about 30 minutes to perform, however examination length may vary from patient to patient. It is important to remember that if the sialogram takes a little longer it does not necessarily mean there is something wrong.

Are there any risks?

This is a safe examination however, as with any examination there are small risks, although these are extremely rare

Radiation exposure: All x-ray procedures involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts. In all x-ray examinations the amount of radiation is kept to the minimum necessary.

Contrast: The injection of contrast medium you have for this test is generally very safe. Many people have this injection in radiology every day. However with every injection of contrast medium there is a slight risk of an allergic reaction. The doctors and radiographers in the Radiology Department are trained to recognise these reactions and treat them. If you have had previous problems with contrast medium please inform us.

Discomfort: You may suffer from minor pain bruising and /or infection from the tube insertion and this may require treatment with antibiotics. There is a very rare risk of perforation of the salivary duct which may require surgery.

Can I eat and drink afterward?

Yes, you can eat and drink as normal following the examination.

What happens with the results?

The x-ray images will be examined after your visit by the radiologist and a written report on the findings sent to the referring doctor. This is normally available in 10-14 days.

Who can I contact for more information

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet. This is only the starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure that you have received enough information about the procedure. Contact your referring doctor or our Radiology Department for further information.

Contact for the radiology department:

Contact number: **0300 019 6792**, 9am-4pm, Monday to Friday

Or alternatively you can email us: **uhd.fluoroappointments@nhs.net**

We can supply this in other formats, in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0300 019 4886**, text or email **pals@uhd.nhs.uk** for further advice.

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please visit our website: **www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets**
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To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email **uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net**.

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