

Patient information leaflet

Water Soluble Contrast Meal and Follow Through Examination

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your Water-soluble contrast meal and follow through examination.

Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a water-soluble contrast meal and follow through examination?

A water-soluble contrast meal and follow through is an examination of your stomach and small bowel using X-rays and a contrast medium (an iodine based solution often known as X-ray dye). The contrast can be seen on X-rays and is used to fill and coat the small bowel making it visible.

Normally, your stomach and small bowel do not show well on X-ray on their own. The contrast can be seen on X-rays and is used to fill and coat the bowel, making it visible.

The test is carried out by a radiologist (a doctor who uses x-ray to diagnose and treat conditions), and a radiographer (a health care professional that helps facilitate the x-ray images safely). Sometimes, an assistant or a student radiographer may also be present.

What are the alternatives?

The main alternative to a water-soluble contrast meal and follow through, are types of scan such as CT, ultrasound and x-rays which can show the size and shape of your digestive system but not how it is working.

Currently, this study has been considered as the most appropriate test for you or may be part of a range of examinations needed to get a diagnosis.

If you have any questions regarding what is the most fitting test for you, please speak to your referring clinical doctor to explain to you the available options.

Why do I need a water-Soluble Contrast meal and follow through Examination?

Your clinical doctor has referred you for a water-soluble contrast meal and follow through examination to help make a diagnosis or to guide further treatment plans.

This test is commonly performed on people with gastro intestinal problems. It may also pick up hernias, abnormal growths, narrowing or blockages of the small bowel.

Your radiographer or radiologist will discuss the procedure and your symptoms as well as any concerns you may have with you.

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If you don't want to you can opt not to go ahead with the Water-soluble contrast meal and follow through examination and we will write to your referring doctor to let them know.

Are there any risks?

X-ray radiation: All x-ray procedures involve exposure to radiation in varying amounts. The dose you get from a medical x-ray is very low and your doctor has determined that the benefits of having the examination outweigh potential risks.

The radiographer is present throughout your test making sure that the dose is kept as low as reasonably possible and the duration and level of x-rays are kept to a minimum.

Aspiration: There is a small risk of inhaling small amounts of liquid, if this occurs you will be assessed and treated as necessary.

Contrast: Very rarely, you may have an allergic reaction to the iodine contrast medium, if this occurs it will be treated by the team looking after you. At any point during or after the examination, if you develop itching or difficulty breathing, tell your radiographer or doctor immediately.

Patients aged 12 to 55, could you be pregnant? X-rays can be harmful to an unborn baby and should be avoided by patients who are or may be pregnant. It is recommended that the examination is performed within 10 days of the first day of your menstrual period.

If your appointment is not within this time or if you think you may be pregnant, please contact the X-ray department before your appointment. When you arrive for your test, you will be asked when your last period started. If it is more than 10 days earlier, your appointment may be postponed.

Will I need an injection?

Occasionally, patients are given a small injection of hyoscine butylbromide (Buscopan) in the arm to help relax the muscles of the stomach. After this injection you may experience some dryness of your mouth and blurred vision.

This will disappear after a few minutes and causes no ill effect

Preparing for your procedure

Please have nothing to eat and drink for six hours before your appointment time.

Please contact the booking team;

- If you plan to use hospital transport or require a hoist transfer
- If you are/may be pregnant

If you are unsure or have questions about your preparation, contact your doctor or the X-ray department for advice.

Please contact the booking team in advance if you plan to use hospital transport or require a hoist transfer.

Allergies

If you have asthma or any allergies, especially to iodine or X-ray contrast (CT or coronary angiogram dye), please inform us in advance.

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Medication

Please continue to take all medications unless you have been advised otherwise.

Getting to us

When attending The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX), follow the signage to the radiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, green zone. Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the radiology department at your given appointment time. A notification through text or letter should have been sent to you to confirm this appointment.

Can someone stay with me in the hospital?

You may have a friend or relative attend with you, but they will be asked to stay in the waiting area while you have your procedure.

Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

The day of the procedure

You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to undress and put on a gown; please bring a dressing gown if you have one. You may also be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, glasses, or other metal objects, which may show up on the X-rays.

The procedure

Your identification will be checked by a nurse and radiographer, a brief history will be taken; please tell the radiologist what medication, severe allergies, choking episodes or other medical conditions, such as thyroid disease and diabetes you may have.

Before the procedure, the interventional radiologist will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form.

Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have and, remember that even at this stage, you can decide against going ahead with the procedure if you so wish.

At the beginning of the examination you will be given a large tumbler full of x ray dye to drink (vanilla or fruit flavor).

You will then wait for this to pass through your digestive system. X-ray pictures are taken to follow the progress of the contrast solution through your small bowel. You may be asked to wait in a small waiting area while the dye moves through your digestive system.

Once the contrast has reached the end of your small bowel, the radiologist will look at your bowel using 'live' X-rays on a TV monitor.

Your radiographer and radiologist will be with you the whole time during the procedure and will explain what is happening or what you need to do on the day. If you have any questions or concerns, it is OK to ask.

How long will this take? The time taken for the contrast to pass through your small bowel varies a great deal from one person to the next. It would not usually be less than an hour

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and may take up to three hours, so you should expect to be in the X-ray department for up to three hours.

Is it uncomfortable? This procedure is not painful but, it can be uncomfortable and unpleasant.

After the procedure

At the end of the test, you will be able to go home immediately or when you feel ready. You can eat or drink normally and take your normal medications.

Can I drive after my procedure?

You are able to drive as soon as you are discharged from the department.

How soon can I return to work?

You are able to return to work as soon as discharged from the department

When will I get my results?

You will not know the results of your examination immediately. The radiologist will report their findings to the clinician who arranged your procedure, who will discuss the results with you. It usually takes a couple of weeks for the results to become available.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions about your procedure or an existing appointment, please contact the radiology department (**Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm**) at **01279 82 7179**
Press option 1 for radiology appointments, then option 4

If you have any queries **outside of working hours (after 4pm and on weekends)**, you will be redirected to the main radiology reception.

Please note appointment bookings cannot be made during this time.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team at paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.

