

Patient information leaflet Cystography (Cystogram)

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your cystogram.

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

What is a cystogram?

A cystogram is an examination of the bladder using contrast medium (an iodine based solution otherwise known as X-ray dye) to show the structure and shape of the bladder and occasionally the micturating (emptying) of the bladder.

Why do I need a cystogram?

It may be that you have had symptoms such as bladder infections, blood in the urine, problems with incontinence (leaking urine) or other symptoms which suggest that you may have a problem with the structure of the bladder.

This examination is also used following recent bladder surgery or bladder injury.

Who will be doing the cystogram procedure?

The procedure is carried out by a radiologist (x-ray doctor) who has been trained to undertake these examinations a radiographer and radiology nurse. The radiology staff may be male or female.

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.

Contrast medium: A very small number of patients have an allergic reaction to the contrast medium (x-ray dye). This can be minor, severe, or even life threatening but the chances of this occurring are very rare. If you get an itchy rash or difficulty breathing during the procedure tell a member of staff, the team will provide appropriate treatment.

Before your examination begins the radiographer will ask you a series of questions about your medical history, including any allergies you may have. This will help us assess if you are at risk of an allergic reaction to the x-ray dye.

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.

Breastfeeding: On the day of your examination, contrast medium will be inserted into your bladder. These agents are low risk contrast agents and will be excreted from your body when you pass urine.

No special precautions are required and you can carry on breastfeeding as normal.

Preparation for a cystogram.

No preparation is required before a cystogram; you can eat and drink as normal. There is no requirement to stop taking any regular medications.

Please leave any jewellery or valuables at home.

Please contact the booking team before your appointment if:

- -you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you have had a previous allergic reaction to x-ray dye (contrast agent) or are allergic to iodine.
- If you weigh over 30 stone/190 kilograms
- If you have problems standing or need a hoist to transfer
- If you require an interpreter – please inform us as soon as you receive your appointment letter, and we will arrange an interpreter for you.

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

Allergies

If you have any allergies you must inform your doctor. If you have previously reacted to contrast medium (the dye used for CT imaging) you must tell your doctor about this.

Medication

You may continue to take all your prescribed medication as usual.

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 changing cubicle and asked to undress and put on a hospital gown. 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.

You will be asked to empty your bladder before the procedure.

To start you will be asked to lie on your back on the x-ray table.

The radiologist will clean your genital area and then slowly and gently insert a very small catheter (tube) into the urethra.

Some lubricating gel will be used to help guide the catheter into place.

As the catheter is being inserted you may feel a slight discomfort which should wear off quickly once the catheter is in the correct position for the examination.

On the tip of the catheter is a small balloon which will be inflated to keep it in place during the examination.

The radiologist will then inject a small amount of the contrast agent through the catheter into your bladder to demonstrate your urethra and bladder filling, whilst taking x-rays.

Depending on the reason for your procedure we may need to take some x-rays during the emptying of the bladder (micturition).

When the radiologist is confident they have the necessary x-rays, they will deflate the balloon on the tip of the catheter and it will be gently removed.

Your nurse, 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 procedure will take about 15-20 minutes. You should be prepared to be in the department for up to an hour.

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

After the procedure

Once the catheter has been removed the radiographer will show you back through to the changing area where you will be able to get dressed again. You may then leave the x-ray department.

Can I drive after my procedure?

We recommend that you do not drive for twenty-four hours and you ask a friend or relative to drive you home following your procedure.

How soon can I return to work?

We recommend you do not undertake strenuous activity and rest for the remainder of the day.

What do I do if I feel unwell after I have gone home?

If you feel unwell after your procedure, you should seek medical advice from your GP/ hospital doctor or through the emergency department and inform them that you have had a procedure.

Follow-up

The images will be studied by the radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose) and the results will be sent to the person who referred you for the examination.

You will have a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss the results of your procedure.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions about your procedure or an existing appointment, please contact the radiology department (**Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm**) at **01279 82 2527 or 3405**

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.