

Patient information leaflet Hysterosalpingogram (HSG)

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your hysterosalpingogram (HSG) procedure. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a hysterosalpingogram?

A HSG is an x-ray procedure to view the inside of the uterus and fallopian tubes.

Why do I need a hysterosalpingogram?

Your gynecologist will have discussed treatment options with you.

An HSG is one of several different fertility tests that can be performed to find out why you are having trouble conceiving.

The x-ray pictures can show if there are any abnormalities in your uterus, as well as if there are any problems in the tubes such as a blockage.

If you are having a sterilisation reversal, the point at which the tube is blocked can be seen.

Who will perform my procedure?

Your procedure will be carried out by a radiologist (specialist x-ray doctor). You will be cared for by the radiology nursing team. A radiographer will perform the x-rays during the procedure.

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 procedure 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.

Procedure risks: A Hysterosalpingogram is a safe, well tolerated procedure, but very rarely, complications may occur.

These include infection, or flare up of an old infection and/or bleeding for which antibiotics will be prescribed.

Very rarely injury to the uterus may occur which may require surgery.

Will I need an injection?

Occasionally, patients are given antibiotics, sedative and painkillers through a cannula placed in your arm.

Preparing for your procedure

This procedure will only be done between day 5 and 12 of your menstrual cycle, counting the first day of your period as day 1. This is to ensure that there is no possibility that you are pregnant, and that your period is complete.

Timing the procedure correctly may take a number of months:

It is important that you telephone the x-ray department on **01279 822527** on the first day of your period. (If this occurs on the weekend please contact us on Monday morning.)

The x-ray department will attempt to give you a date for the procedure within the 5 days.

If the procedure cannot be carried out during this monthly cycle, you will then be asked to repeat phoning on the first day of your next period and further periods until a suitable date is arranged.

You **MUST** abstain from sexual intercourse from the first day of your period, until the procedure has been carried out. This is to ensure there is no risk of pregnancy as the procedure may be harmful to a developing fetus.

You may eat and drink normally before the procedure.

Please leave any jewellery or valuables at home.

Please contact the booking team before your appointment if:

- If you have had a previous allergic reaction to x-ray dye (contrast agent) or are allergic to iodine.
- 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 asthma or any allergies, especially to iodine or contrast medium (x-ray dye), please inform us in advance.

Medication

Please continue to take all medications as usual prior to your examination unless 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. You will also be asked to empty your bladder.

The procedure

Your identification will be checked by a nurse and radiographer, a brief history will be taken. Before the procedure, the interventional radiologist (x-ray doctor) will explain the procedure and ask you to sign an electronic consent form; please tell the radiologist what medication, severe allergies, choking episodes or other medical conditions, such as thyroid disease and diabetes you may have.

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 lie on the X-ray table, generally flat on your back. You may have monitoring devices attached to your chest and finger and will be given oxygen.

The procedure is performed under sterile conditions and the interventional radiologist and radiology nurse will wear sterile gowns and gloves.

You will be asked to lie on an x-ray table, in the position used for a pelvic examination and you are examined as you are for cervical screening.

The Radiologist or nurse will clean your labia (folds of skin around your vaginal opening) and insert a speculum into your vagina.

A speculum is an instrument that allows the doctor or nurse to see your cervix, which is the opening to the uterus (womb).

A catheter, which is a thin plastic tube is then placed just inside the cervix.

This catheter is then used to inject contrast media into your uterus and tubes. Contrast media is used because it can be easily seen inside the body when an x-ray picture is taken.



Once the x-rays are taken, the instruments are removed from your vagina and you will be provided with a sanitary towel. The x-ray contrast media is a clear sticky fluid and will drain out of your vagina. Once the procedure is completed, you may get dressed and go home.

Is it uncomfortable?

Some patients feel some discomfort during the procedure, at the time when the contrast media is passed into the uterus. This has been described as cramp type period pains.

However, the discomfort only lasts for a short period of time and usually subsides when the procedure is complete.

If the pain gets worse afterwards, you should contact your GP or the hospital straight away.

After the procedure

You will be given an advice sheet for information of aftercare when you get home.

You may experience period like pain or cramping and may wish to take paracetamol or something similar for relief.

If the pain persists you should contact your GP or attend the emergency department, stating what procedure you have had.

Can I drive after my procedure?

No, it is important that you have a responsible adult to escort you home. You must not drive or use public transport for the journey home.

How soon can I return to work?

It is recommended that you rest for the remainder of the day. Avoid heavy lifting and gym exercise. You can return back to work after 48 hours.

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 nursing department (**Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm**) at **01279 82 2527 / 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.