

Patient information leaflet

Venogram

Radiology department

Introduction

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

What is a venogram?

A venogram is an investigation to look at the deep veins in your body using x-rays and x-ray dye (an iodine based solution called contrast medium). This is to detect any abnormalities with the veins.

Why do I need a venogram?

The venogram will provide us with the information required to see if you require any further treatment such as embolisation, surgery or medication.

There are other tests that can provide us with information about your veins, such as ultrasound, which provide useful information, and you may already have had some other tests performed. It is felt that in your case the best way of obtaining the amount of detail required is by Venography.

Who will be doing the venogram?

Your venogram will be performed by a specially trained x-ray doctor called a Radiologist. Radiologists have special expertise in interpreting the images produced and in treating patient's blood vessels.

The Radiologist will be assisted throughout the procedure by Radiographers who are specially trained to operate the imaging equipment and Radiology nurses; who will assist the radiologist and look after you throughout your venogram.

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.

Allergic reaction: A very small number of patients have an allergic reaction to the 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.

Procedure: Venography is considered a very safe procedure, designed to obtain sufficient information about your circulation to allow you and your doctors to make an informed decision about your future treatment. There are some slight risks and possible complications involved.

There may occasionally be a small bruise, called a haematoma, around the site where the needle has been inserted, and this is quite normal.

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, you will be given an injection of contrast medium. These agents are low risk contrast agents. A very small percentage of the injected contrast enters the breast milk but virtually none is absorbed across the gut of the infant. No special precautions are required and you can carry on breastfeeding as normal. However, if you have any concerns you may want to express some breast milk prior to your appointment.

Preparation for a venogram

You may be asked not to eat for four hours before the procedure, although you may still drink clear fluids such as water.

Please continue to take all medications that can be taken with water only.

If you are an insulin-dependent diabetic, do not take your insulin in the morning; please bring it with you to the hospital.

Please leave any jewellery or valuables at home.

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 taking METFORMIN please call the department in advance.
- 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 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 x-ray dye (contrast medium) you must tell your doctor about this.

Medication

Please contact the radiology department if you are taking blood thinning medication (anti coagulants) such as Warfarin, Aspirin, Rivaroxaban, Dabigatran, Apixaban, Edoxaban or Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor. You may be asked to stop or be given alternative medication.

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.

You will then be taken into the X-ray room where you will be asked to lie down on the X-ray table. The nurse will paint the groin or neck area with cold antiseptic skin preparation and cover the groin or neck area with sterile towels to keep the area clean.

We will also be taking your blood pressure and pulse at intervals throughout the procedure.

A small injection of local anaesthetic will be given in the skin at the chosen area. This will sting at first and then go numb.

A small tube is then passed into the vein in your neck or groin via a small needle and wire. You may feel some pushing at this stage, but it should not be painful.

You must tell the radiologist if you are in pain, as we can help by giving you more local anaesthetic.

Once the tube is in position, an injection of x-ray contrast/dye will be injected via the tube to show the veins. You may feel a warm sensation in the groin area; this is normal.

The radiologist will take some x-rays of the area under investigation.

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 may take over 30 minutes, although you will be in the department for a longer period to ensure no there have been no complications.

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

After the procedure

Once the radiologist is happy the procedure is complete, the tube will be removed. The radiologist may then have to press on the area for a few minutes to prevent any bleeding and minimise bruising.

You will be taken to the recovery area where you will be kept under observation for about an hour or until the staff are happy you are well enough to go home.

A nurse will carry out routine observations, such as taking your pulse and blood pressure, to make sure there are no problems.

If you have any pain following the procedure, we may give you some pain-relief medication.

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?

This will depend on the individual, but most patients recover within one week.

However, we recommend that you avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for the first 48 hours after your procedure.

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.

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.

