

## Patient information leaflet

### Sinogram

Radiology department

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#### Introduction

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

#### What is a sinogram?

A sinogram is a special X-ray examination to show the passage or 'track' of a sinus cavity in the body that opens out as a wound onto the skin surface, using x-rays and x-ray dye (contrast medium).

#### Why do I need a sinogram?

A sinogram is usually performed to see why a wound won't heal.

#### Who will be doing the sinogram?

A radiologist (X-ray doctor) assisted by a radiographer and a radiology department nurse will perform the examination.

#### 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 the wound/area of concern. 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 sinogram.

There is no special preparation for this examination.

You may eat and drink as normal.

If you normally use a stoma bag over the wound, please bring an extra one with you for use after the procedure. You may wish to bring a small wash kit and towel with you for after the procedure.

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 are a diabetic taking Metformin.
- If you have been advised or told to restrict your fluid intake.
- 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 taking Metformin tablets, it is important you let us know in advance. You will be required to have a blood test within 7 days of the date of your appointment. This will be to check that your kidneys are functioning at a level good enough to eliminate the contrast medium from your body.

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 (X-ray dye) you must tell your doctor about this.

### Medication

Please continue to take all usual medications.

### 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.

Your skin will be washed with antiseptic skin preparation and a small catheter (plastic tube) is inserted gently into the opening of the sinus on the skin surface.

A small amount of X-ray dye (contrast medium, which is a colourless iodine based liquid that shows up on X-rays) is injected through the catheter into the sinus and X-rays will be taken to show where the contrast goes.

When all the X-rays have been taken, the catheter will be removed and your skin will be covered with a sterile dressing, or the stoma bag will be replaced if you have brought one with you.

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 up to 45 minutes.

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

## After the procedure

After the procedure, the images will be examined further by the radiologist, who will then write a report on the findings. The results will be available from the clinician who sent you for the examination.

## Can I drive after my procedure?

We recommend that you do not drive 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.

## 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](mailto:paht.pals@nhs.net) or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at [paht.communications@nhs.net](mailto:paht.communications@nhs.net) if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.

