

Patient information leaflet Sialogram

Radiology department

Introduction

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

What is a Sialogram examination?

This is an examination to look at salivary glands using X-rays and a contrast medium (an iodine based solution often known as X-ray dye).

It is carried out to look in detail at the larger salivary glands, namely the parotid or submandibular glands. These glands drain saliva into your mouth through small ducts.

The parotid duct opens on the inside of the cheek next to the upper back teeth. The submandibular duct opens on the inside of the mouth under the tongue immediately behind the front teeth.

What are the alternatives?

This is the most reliable way of viewing the small ducts from your salivary glands. Alternative options include MRI and ultrasound.

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.

Why do I need a Sialogram examination?

Your doctor should have explained the reason why you need this test. It is usually to investigate potential blockages of the salivary ducts.

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 as low as reasonably possible and the duration and level of x-rays are kept to a minimum.

Contrast: Very rarely, you may have an allergic reaction to the contrast medium. At any point during or after the examination, if you develop itching or difficulty breathing, tell your radiographer or doctor immediately.

Preparing for your procedure

No preparation is required for this examination.

You may continue to eat and drink as you normally would. If this changes you will be advised appropriately beforehand.

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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 contrast medium please inform us in advance.

Medication

Please continue to take all medications as usual, prior to your examination.

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 put on a 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.

The radiologist (x-ray doctor) who performs your Sialogram will pass a small plastic tube into the duct of the salivary gland under investigation.

The tube is blunt and therefore is not particularly painful and does not require a local anaesthetic injection.

Once the tube is in the correct position contrast medium will be passed through the tube into the salivary gland, this takes a few minutes. The tube is then removed and a selection of x-ray images are taken.

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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? This examination can take up to 30 minutes, however, you should expect to be in the department for up to an hour.

Is it uncomfortable? This procedure is not painful but it can be uncomfortable. Any discomfort felt should wear off shortly after. There is a small risk of introducing infection. If your salivary gland becomes more painful, swollen or red and inflamed you should contact your GP.

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.