

Division of Imaging

Information for Patients

Urethrogram

The aim of this information sheet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having your examination. It explains the benefits and risks of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come for the examination.

The date and time of your appointment are shown in your appointment letter. If you are unable to come to this appointment, please contact the department as soon as possible. We will not automatically send out a second appointment.

What is a Urethrogram?

A urethrogram is an investigation that allows us to see the urethra (the tube that passes through the penis and leads to the bladder). The procedure is carried out by an advanced practitioner radiographer who has been trained to undertake these examinations and a chaperone. The radiographer and chaperone may be male or female.

What happens during the Urethrogram procedure?

The procedure is carried out by an advanced practitioner radiographer who has been trained to undertake these examinations and a chaperone.

- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown.
- You might be asked to remove certain items of clothing and jewellery.
- The person completing the procedure will ask you to confirm some details including date of birth and pregnancy status.
- You will be asked to empty your bladder prior to the examination.

You will then be brought into the examination room and asked to lie on the X-ray table. Your genital area will be cleaned and draped with sterile towels.

Some local anaesthetic jelly will be inserted into the opening of your urethra using a small nozzle. This is used to make the examination more comfortable.

A tube called a catheter will be carefully inserted into your urethra (the opening through which you urinate) and into your bladder. This tube will be kept in place by inflating a small balloon.

A small amount of the contrast dye will then be passed through the urethra and into the bladder via the catheter, whilst the X-ray images are taken.

Once all the X-ray images have been taken, the catheter will be removed.

Will I feel any pain?

There may be some discomfort when the catheter is inserted but this should not be painful.

Some people experience discomfort urinating during and immediately after the procedure. This discomfort usually resolves in less than 12 hours. If this does not resolve within a few days, please contact your referring doctor or GP.

Are there any risks with this examination?

A urethrogram is generally regarded as a very safe test. Problems can occur rarely. These include the following:

Radiation risk

The use of X-rays may mean that there is a slight increase in the chance of cancer occurring many years after your examination. However, urethrograms are generally regarded as a low dose procedure.

Although this examination involves the use of X-rays, your doctor will have decided that the benefit of having the scan far outweighs any risks. The dose is equal to the natural radiation we all receive from our surroundings over a period of approximately 1 – 5 years.

It is also worth noting that these risk levels only represent very small additions to the 1 in 3 chance we all have of getting cancer.

The radiographer is responsible for making sure that your dose is kept as low as possible and that the benefits of having the x-ray outweigh any risk.

Contrast risk

We will need to give you contrast dye to make areas of your body show up more clearly.

The radiographers will complete a checklist to ensure it is safe for you to have the dye and you will be asked to sign this form as a consent, the specific side effects are documented on the checklists that you complete.

The contrast dye that is sometimes used can cause allergic reactions however the staff available will be checking for any risks before we proceed.

Is there anything I need to inform you of before I attend for my appointment?

Pregnancy:

Radiation can be harmful for an unborn baby. If you are or think you may be pregnant you must tell the radiographer before the examination.

For some examinations the radiographer may check your pregnancy status with you before the examination.

Each examination request will be checked by the radiographer to make sure it is properly justified and necessary.

It is often the first point of investigation to help the doctor decide if any other forms of imaging or tests are needed.

How do I prepare for my Urethrogram?

There is no specific preparation for a urethrogram examination. Continue to take your medicines as you normally would.

Clothes and accessories:

There are some clothes that can affect the quality of the x-ray and you may be asked to remove them and wear a hospital gown.

You may also be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, glasses and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images.

Help and support in the department

If you have any medical problem which you feel may affect your safety in the department, or if you feel you may need any assistance, please let us know when you arrive.

Do I need to give my permission (consent)?

The radiographer will ask you if you are happy for the examination to go ahead. This is called verbal consent and might only involve the radiographer checking you are booked for the correct examination.

If you do not wish to have the examination or are undecided, please ask the radiographer so that they can answer any questions you may have.

Remember, it is your decision. You can change your mind at any time and your wishes will be respected.

However, not having the examination may delay your diagnosis as the referring clinician may not have all the needed information.

How long will it take?

The examination lasts approximately 20 minutes but may take longer.

When it is completed you will be allowed to leave the examination room.

The radiographer will usually not be able to give you any idea of the results at that time.

What happens after the Urethrogram?

There are no after effects to the examination. The anaesthetic effect of the jelly will wear off in approximately 30 minutes. Once you are happy to leave, you are free to do so. Please contact your GP or referring team if you feel unwell in the days following the examination.

When will I get my results?

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

The radiographer will tell you how to get your results and how long it will take, as this may be slightly different for each patient.

You may already have an appointment with the clinician who referred you. If not, please contact them to arrange a time to talk about the results and any treatment you may need.

If you are staying in hospital, the results will be given to the doctors looking after you on the ward.

What should I do if I have a problem?

You should not have any problems that is a result of the Urethrogram.

If you feel your condition has changed, or you need further medical advice before receiving your results/after leaving the hospital, please make an appointment with the doctor that referred you, or in an emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED).

How can I provide feedback for the appointment I have attended today?

The Division of Imaging welcomes feedback from all our patients. We actively take part in the Friends and Family Test and we complete a patient experience questionnaire every month to obtain feedback on the experiences you have had. Please speak to a member of staff regarding the feedback or there are posters within the department with QR codes so you can complete these online.

Contact us

For contact information please refer to your appointment letter or if you are an inpatient, please direct your queries to one of the medical staff on the ward.

Alternatively e-mail all enquiries to: giradiographers@mft.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services:

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

Your comments and concerns

If you would like to provide feedback you can:

- Ask to speak to the department lead / manager.
- Write to us: Patient Advice and Liaison Services, 1st Floor, Cobbett House, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WL.
- Log onto the Patient Opinion website www.patientopinion.org.uk/ click on 'Tell your Story'

If you would like to discuss a concern or make a complaint:

Ask to speak to the department manager – they may be able to help straight away. Inpatients can speak to a senior nurse or manager by contacting the Tell Us Today service on (0161) 701 1999.

Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (0161) 276 8686 email: pals@mft.nhs.uk. Ask for our information leaflet.

We welcome your feedback so we can continue to improve our services.

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

Telephone: 111, 24 hours a day

Website: www.111.nhs.uk

Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Further information can be obtained by contacting the radiology department that is performing the procedure.