

Information for Patients

Fluorescein Angiography

What is Fluorescein Angiography?

Fluorescein angiography is a diagnostic photographic procedure that uses a contrast dye to give a detailed view of the retinal circulatory system the back of your eye. This shows any blocked or leaking blood vessels, or new blood vessel formation. This assists the doctors in deciding on the best treatment for your condition.

Where do I go for the test?

The test is carried out in Clinic D which is situated on the ground floor of the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. On arrival please report to the reception desk in Clinic D, and hand in your appointment letter so that the clerical staff can book you in.

What happens in the clinic?

The nurse undertaking the fluorescein clinic will call you in time order depending on your appointment time. They will introduce themselves and other members of the imaging team. They will explain the procedure to you and take relevant details in the form of a health assessment questionnaire.

It is important that you inform the nurse at this point if you are sensitive to **any drugs, are pregnant, or are breast-feeding**. You will be informed about how the procedure is performed, including a brief explanation of the potential risk of side effects. Then you will be asked to sign a consent form which confirms your agreement to undergo the procedure. Please feel free to ask as many questions as needed before you sign.

The nurse will then put drops into the eye that is to be imaged or if images are required of both, then both eyes will have drops instilled. These drops enlarge your pupil (black part of the eye) and take about 20-30 minutes to work. As these drops temporarily blur your vision for 6-8 hours, it is advisable not to drive yourself to your appointment. You may find it helpful to bring a pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes from the glare of daylight or artificial indoor lighting following the procedure as your eyes will be more sensitive to the light following the dilating drops.

Following this the nurse will insert a cannula (a small plastic tube) into a vein in your forearm or the back of your hand, in order to inject the dye at a later stage.

When your pupils are fully dilated, you will be called into the camera room and asked to take a seat in front of the camera. The science practitioner will then take a series of initial images, both in colour and black and white. Following this, the nurse will inject a small amount of fluorescein sodium dye through your cannula. The dye will go all around your circulatory system and quickly enter the blood vessels at the back of your eye, taking approximately 6-12 seconds. As soon as the dye is injected the science practitioner will begin taking images in three stages, early phase, mid phase and late phase, each phase providing more information.

Throughout the procedure it is important that you keep your chin on the chin rest and your forehead against the head band and listen very carefully to the instructions that the science practitioner gives you in order to get the best result. Any sudden movement or excessive blinking will interfere with the quality of the image produced. If you have difficulty keeping your eyes open, the nurse will gently assist by lifting your eye lids if required.

The procedure from beginning to end will take approximately 15–20 minutes. However, you may be in the department longer depending of the activity of the clinic and how many patients are waiting to be seen before you.

Are there any side effects?

Most people experience no ill effects following this procedure, apart from temporary blurring of vision and dazzle from the light of the camera flash. However, there is a potential risk of side effects that are common such as nausea (a feeling of sickness) or vomiting. The nurse injecting the dye will be with you throughout the procedure, and will have a vomit bowl available if you require it.

Less common potential side effects are dizziness, sneezing, rashes, itching, and bronchospasm (where it can affect your breathing and cause a tightness of your chest).

There is a very small risk of anaphylactic shock and heart attack, which is extremely rare with a 1 in 100,000 chance of it occurring.

For some people the dye will make your skin appear light yellow and your urine will be bright fluorescent yellow for a day or two. This effect is normal and is due to the concentration of the dye. It is important to drink plenty of fluids over this time to help flush the dye through your kidneys.

Very occasionally the fluorescein dye, once injected, goes outside the vein into the skin tissue of your hand or arm. This can be quite painful. In the unlikely event that this does occur use hot and cold compresses over the affected area to help the dye absorb and reduce swelling. Taking pain relief medication for example Paracetamol, will help. **If you are already taking pain relief medication for a different condition continue with these, but do not take both.** If there is any bruising present it will take approximately a week for it to disappear and for your skin to return to normal.

When will I get the results?

The results of the procedure will be studied carefully by the doctor who requested the procedure, or a member of your consultant's medical team. If you have a follow up appointment already please ensure you know when it is before leaving the department. If you don't have a follow up appointment made, an appointment will be sent out to you once the doctor has looked at the results. If the doctor decides you need to be seen earlier than the arranged appointment, then an earlier appointment will be sent to you.

It is important that you take any tablets or medicine as normal, and to eat and drink as normal on the day of your appointment. Please remember to bring a list of your current medication with you.

If you have any questions in regards to Fluorescein Angiography or anything contained in this information leaflet, please contact a member of staff on (0161) 276 5183 Monday – Thursday, 8.00 am - 4.00pm and Friday 8.00 am – 4.00 pm.



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