

Having a sialogram to look at the salivary glands and ducts in your mouth

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: July 2023

Next review: July 2026

Leaflet number: 25 Version: 6

Introduction

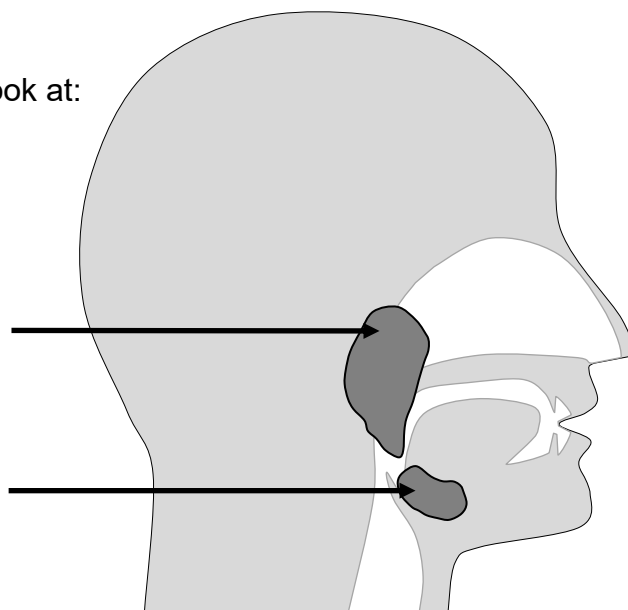
If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully. Please check which hospital your appointment is at. This leaflet tells you about your test.

What is a sialogram?

A sialogram is an X-ray test that looks at the salivary glands and ducts in your mouth. The salivary glands make saliva. The glands attach to the mouth through small tubes called ducts.

There are 2 types of salivary gland that we can look at:

- **The parotid glands** are found on each side of the face, between the teeth and ears. The parotid ducts open on the inside of the cheek, next to the upper back teeth.
- **The submandibular glands** are found under the lower teeth. The submandibular ducts open on the inside of the mouth, under the tongue and just behind the lower front teeth.



**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Why do I need a sialogram?

Your doctor has asked for you to have a sialogram because they think that 1 of your salivary glands is blocked. You might have pain and swelling in your mouth. The aim of this test will find out if there is a blockage and where it is.

How do I get ready for the sialogram?

You do not need to do anything special to get ready. You can eat and drink as usual.

Keep on taking any medication you are currently taking unless your doctor tells you not to take.

What happens during the sialogram?

- When you get to the Radiology Department you will be directed to the relevant waiting area.
- If you are having a sialogram of the submandibular gland you may have an X-ray in a different department before the sialogram. This will be arranged for you.
- You will be taken into the X-ray room. The examination will be explained to you. You may ask any questions that you may have.
- You will be asked to take off any necklaces, earrings, hearing aids, dentures or tongue piercings.
- You will then be asked to lay down on the X-ray table. X-ray pictures may be taken of your head.
- You will need to stay lying down and keep still with your mouth open.
- The radiologist will put a small tube (cannula) into the opening of the salivary duct. This part of the procedure may feel a little uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- When the tube is in place a small amount of colourless liquid that shows up on X-rays (contrast liquid) will be put through the tube into the duct and gland to show them up.
- X-ray pictures will then be taken with your head in different positions.
- The contrast liquid may taste bitter but it will not harm you if you swallow some. You may feel some discomfort when the contrast liquid goes into the salivary ducts but it should not be painful.
- The small tube will be taken out.
- You will then be given a bitter drink to help drain the contrast liquid from your salivary gland.
- More X-rays may be then taken.

Who will be doing the sialogram?

A doctor who specialises in imaging and X-ray treatments (an interventional radiologist) will do the test.

There will also be someone trained in X-rays (a radiographer or assistant practitioner) in the room. There may also be a healthcare assistant.

As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be present. If you wish, you can ask that a student is not present during your examination.

How long will it take?

Every patient's situation is different. It is not always easy to know how tricky or how straightforward the test will be. The test usually takes about 30 minutes but it may take up to 60 minutes.

What happens after the test?

When the test is over you can go home. You can eat and drink normally.

How do I get the results?

You will not be given the results straight away.

The radiologist will look at the X-ray pictures. The results will then be sent to the GP or consultant who wanted you to have this test.

You will be told of how to get your results after your test.

If you are staying in hospital overnight (inpatient), you will get the results from the doctors looking after you on the ward.

Are there any risks and complications?

As with any procedure or operation, complications are possible. Also, common risks and complications are different for each person, but we have included them in this leaflet. We will speak to about your risks before you sign the consent form. They can be:

- **Reaction to the contrast liquid** - some patients may be allergic to the contrast liquid. They may have symptoms such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting), or a rash. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital please tell the doctor, or staff looking after you. If you start to get symptoms at home please contact your GP or call the NHS helpline on 111.
- **The small tube (cannula) cannot be put into the salivary ducts.** Sometimes it is not possible to do the test. If this is the case you will be told about it at the time.
- **Minor bleeding:** this is caused by the use of the tube in the salivary duct.

What are the risks from exposure to radiation in this examination?

The main risk from exposure to X-rays is a higher risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small.

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground.

Each test that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation.

The benefits of having this test are likely to outweigh any possible risks. The risks of not having the test could be greater. We try to keep your exposure to X-rays as low as possible.

What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment :

- Please call the X-ray department on **0116 258 8765** and select **option 7**.

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding bank holidays.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

જે તુમીં ઇંચ જાણવાની કિમે હેર જામા વિંચ ચાહુંદે હે, ઝાં વિરખા વચ્ચે હેઠાં સિંઝે ગણે નંબર '૩ ટેલીફોન વચે।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk