

Having an X-ray of your bile ducts (cholangiogram) after surgery

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: June 2023

Next review: June 2026

Leaflet number: 111 Version: 2

Introduction

If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital your appointment is at. This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it has important information and instructions.

What is an X-ray of the bile ducts (cholangiogram)?

A cholangiogram is an X-ray examination to look at your bile ducts. You will already have a drain (either a T-tube or biliary drain) in your bile ducts. A liquid that shows up on X-rays (contrast liquid) is injected through the drain to show if the bile ducts are draining.

Why is this X-ray needed?

A T-Tube cholangiogram is an X-ray examination done a few days after an operation to take out the gallbladder.

The surgeon sometimes leaves a tube in the bile duct if there is a chance there could be a gallstone remaining in one of the ducts.

The tube is brought out onto the surface of the tummy (abdomen) at the time of surgery. It is attached to a collecting bag.

X-ray dye (contrast) is introduced through the T tube to find or rule out gallstones within the bile ducts on X-rays.

**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

Important information

The contrast liquid has iodine and is cleared by the kidneys in your pee (urine) or at your routine dialysis, if you have dialysis.

Please tell the X-ray staff when you arrive if you:

- **are allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, have any other allergies or have asthma.
- **have had a reaction in the past to an intravenous contrast liquid**, the dye used for kidney X-rays and CT scanning and X-rays of your heart and blood vessels.
- **are on kidney (renal) dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys.**
- **have diabetes.**
- **There is any possibility that you may be pregnant.**

The radiographer will ask you questions about your health before the test starts. This is to see if you might be allergic to the contrast liquid.

How do I get ready for the examination?

You do not need to do anything special to get ready.

You can eat and drink as normal on the day.

If you are on medicines from your doctor please keep on taking them as normal.

If you have a stoma bag, it is best to empty it before your examination.

If there is any possibility that you may be pregnant or have allergies to iodine or rubber (latex) please contact the Radiology Department at once. Call the phone number on your appointment letter.

What happens during the examination?

You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to take off some of your clothes. You will be given a hospital gown to wear.

You will be taken into the X-ray room where the examination will be explained and you can ask any questions. You will then be asked to lie down on the X-ray table.

The drainage tube will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution.

A contrast liquid (a clear liquid which shows up on X-rays) will be injected through the drain and into your bile ducts so they can be seen using X-rays. X-ray pictures will be taken.

When all the X-rays have been taken the drain may be removed and your skin will be covered with a sterile dressing.

Most people do not find the procedure painful.

The area around the drain may be sticky if some of the contrast liquid spills. This can be washed off.

If you normally use a stoma bag please bring a spare bag with you.

Who will be doing the procedure?

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

There will also be a nurse and a radiographer 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?

The examination lasts about 15 to 30 minutes.

How do I get the results?

You will not have the results straight away. We will explain how you will get your results. If you are staying in hospital, the results will be given to the doctors looking after you on the ward.

Are there any risks?

As with any procedure or operation, complications are possible. We have included the most common risks and complications in this leaflet, although they are different for each person. Your risks will be discussed with you before you sign the consent form.

- **Reaction to contrast liquid** - Some patients may be allergic to the contrast liquid and 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, tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you start to get symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call 111.
- **Bleeding** - There may be a small amount of bleeding from the site for a short time. If the bleeding does not stop please call your GP or 111.

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

The main risk from exposure to X-rays is an increase in the 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, food we eat, and the ground. Each examination that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child so we must ask some patients aged 10 to 55 years about their periods and chance of being pregnant.

The benefits of this examination are likely to outweigh any potential risk and the risk from not having the examination could be greater. We will take all safeguards to minimise the amount of X-rays you get.

What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment please call the radiology 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

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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