

Having a venogram or fistulogram to see the veins in your arm on an X-ray

Radiology Department

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: May 2026

Next review: May 2029

Leaflet number: 14 Version: 8

Introduction

Please read your appointment letter carefully. Check which hospital your appointment is at.

Please read all of this leaflet. It tells you about your X-ray test. It has important information and instructions.

What is an arm venogram?

An arm venogram is a type of X-ray test. It looks at the inside of the **veins in your arm and upper chest**.

Veins do not show up on a normal X-ray. During an arm venogram, we inject a special dye that shows up on the X-ray pictures. We do this to look at the size and shape of the veins. This will help us see if there are any narrowings or blockages.

We also do this test on patients who need a kidney dialysis. It helps us to see if there is a suitable vein we can use to make a fistula for haemodialysis. A fistula is made by joining a vein onto an artery.

What is a fistulogram?

A fistulogram is a type of X-ray test to look at the **inside of a fistula**. During a fistulogram, we inject a special dye that shows up on the X-ray pictures. We do this to look at the size and shape of the fistula. This is to see if there are any narrowings or blockages in the fistula.

We may do this test if a **new fistula** does not develop properly.

We may also do it if an **older fistula** has low blood flow during dialysis or if there are problems putting a needle into it (difficult to access).

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

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

What happens during the venogram or fistulogram?

- We may show you to a changing cubicle. You will get changed into a hospital gown.
- We will take you into the X-ray room. We will talk to you about your X-ray test. You may ask any questions that you have.
- You will lie down on the X-ray table.
- We will inject a colourless liquid called contrast into a vein or the fistula in your arm. Contrast shows up on X-ray pictures.
- We will take some X-ray pictures as the contrast moves up the vein or fistula.
- We will look at the X-ray pictures on a screen. We will look for any narrow areas.

How do I get ready?

- You do not need to do anything special to get ready.
- You can eat and drink as usual on the day.
- Please bring any sprays or inhalers with you.
- **If you are on medicine** from your doctor please take it as usual.

Important information before you have X-ray contrast liquid:

The contrast liquid used in your X-ray test has iodine in it. Your kidneys remove iodine from your body. It comes out in your pee (urine). If you have kidney dialysis, this will remove the iodine.

We will ask you questions about your health before the test starts.

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

- You are **allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, or have any other allergies or have asthma.
- You have had a **reaction in the past to a contrast liquid injected into a vein** (intravenous contrast). This is the dye used for kidney X-rays, CT scanning and X-rays of your heart and blood vessels.
- You are on **kidney dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys**.
- You have **diabetes**.

You may get a warm feeling and a metallic taste when we inject the contrast. You may feel sick. If you do get these feelings they often last about 1 minute. Please tell us if you get these feelings.

You may get a warm feeling in your bladder. It can feel like you are about to pee. This feeling goes after a few seconds. This is also normal.

Who will be doing my X-ray test?

- A doctor who specialises in imaging and X-ray treatments (an **interventional radiologist**) will do your test.
- A **radiographer** will move and control the special X-ray equipment.
- A **nurse** and maybe a **healthcare assistant** will work with the radiologist. They will help care for you.
- A **student** may also be in the room. If you do not want this, you can ask that a student is not in the room when you have your procedure.

How long will my test take?

- An arm venogram or fistulogram often takes about **20 to 30 minutes**.

What happens after the test?

- We may ask you to stay in the Radiology Department for a short time after your test. This is so we can make sure that you feel okay.
- If you have any problems after you go home please contact your GP or call **NHS 111**.

Are there any risks?

As with any procedure there is a risk of complications. Below are the most common risks and complications. The chance of these happening is different for each person.

- **Bruise.** You may have a small bruise after the test. This is from where we did the injection.
- **Bleeding.** You may get some bleeding where we do the injection. If this happens we will treat it at the time. The risk of this happening is small.
- **Reaction to contrast liquid.** Some patients may be allergic to the contrast liquid. You could get symptoms such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting). You could get a rash. Any side effects often happen within 20 minutes. 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**.

How do I get my results?

- You will not get the results straight away.
- After your test we will tell you who the results will go to and how to get your results.
- The radiologist will look at your X-ray pictures again.
- The results will be sent to the GP or hospital doctor who wanted you to have this test.
- If you are an inpatient the results will be given to the doctors looking after you on the ward.



Your test report will go on the NHS App after an inbuilt delay. Your GP or hospital doctor may have access to your report sooner than you. These reports are medically technical reports. They are written for the referrer to help to make a diagnosis and pick treatment options. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your referring clinician.

What are the risks from exposure to radiation in this X-ray test?

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, food we eat, and the ground. Each test that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation.

The radiation from the X-rays during an arm venogram or fistulogram is equivalent to receiving about a few weeks worth of 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 Radiology department:

Phone: **0116 258 8765** 

Choose: **option 7**

Lines open: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, but not on 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 بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અસ્ય 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 uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net