

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

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

Produced: May 2019

Last reviewed: June 2022

Next review: June 2025

Leaflet number: 14 Version: 7

## Introduction

Please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital you must go to for your appointment. This leaflet tells you about your examination. Please read it carefully as it contains important information and instructions.

## What is an arm venogram?

An arm venogram is a type of X-ray examination that 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 a special dye is injected that shows up on the X-ray pictures. This is usually done to look at the size and shape of the veins to see if there are any narrowings or blockages.

For some patients who need kidney dialysis, an arm venogram is done to see if there is a suitable vein which can be used 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 examination that looks at the inside of a fistula in the arm for patients who have haemodialysis. During a fistulogram a special dye is injected that shows up on the X-ray pictures. It is usually done to look at the size and shape of the fistula to see if there are any narrowings or blockages in the fistula. This can be when a new fistula fails to develop, or when an established fistula gives reduced flows on dialysis or is difficult to access.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://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](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What happens during the venogram or fistulogram?

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will be taken into the X-ray room where the examination will be explained to you, and you may ask any questions that you have.

A liquid that shows up on X-rays (contrast liquid) is injected into a vein or the fistula in your arm. A series of X-ray pictures are taken as the contrast liquid travels up the vein or fistula.

The doctor doing the procedure then looks at the X-ray pictures on a screen to look for any narrowings.

## How do I get ready for the examination?

You do not need to do any special preparation to get ready for this examination.

Please bring any sprays or inhalers with you.

If you are on medication from your doctor please continue to take it as normal.

## Important information before you have X-ray contrast liquid:

The contrast liquid contains iodine and is cleared by the kidneys in your pee, or at your routine dialysis if you have dialysis. The radiographer will ask you some questions about your health before the procedure starts to see if you might be allergic to the contrast liquid.

Some patients get a warm feeling and a metallic taste when the injection is given and sometimes may feel sick. If you do get these feelings they usually last about 1 minute. Please let the staff who are with you know if you get these feelings. Some patients will also have the feeling that they are passing urine, but they are not actually doing so. This is also normal.

## 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 reacted previously 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 renal dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys.**
- **have diabetes.**

## 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 present.

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 the procedure take?

An arm venogram or fistulogram normally takes about 20 to 30 minutes.

## What happens after the examination?

You will have had an injection into a vein or fistula in your arm. Therefore you may have a small bruise after the procedure. You should have no other after-effects from this examination. However, we may ask you to stay in the Radiology Department for a short time after your examination to make sure that you feel okay.

If you have any problems after the procedure please contact your GP.

## How do I get the results?

The results will not be given to you immediately. Your X-ray pictures will be looked at by a radiologist and the results will be sent to the doctor who referred you for this examination.

If you are an inpatient the results will be given to the doctors looking after you on the ward.

An explanation of how to get your results will be given to you after your examination.

## Are there any risks?

As with any procedure or operation, complications are possible. The most common risks and complications are:

- **bleeding** - there is a small risk of bleeding from where the needle is inserted. If this happens it will be treated at the time.
- **a reaction to the 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 medical staff looking after you. If you develop symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call the NHS helpline on 111.

## What are the risks from radiation in this procedure?

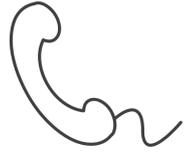
The main risk from exposure to X-rays is an increase in the risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small. We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, food we eat, and the ground. Each examination which uses X-rays, 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 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 receive.

## What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make your appointment, please call the Radiology Department on **0116 258 8765 (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 بلغةٍ 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 ਕਸਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਜਿ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦੱਤੇ 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](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)