

Having an X-ray of your uterus and fallopian tubes (hysterosalpingogram)

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

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

What is a hysterosalpingogram?

A hysterosalpingogram (pronounced hiss-ter-oh-sal-ping-oh-gram) is a special X-ray exam that produces images of a woman's womb (uterus) and fallopian (uterine) tubes. It is also known as a 'salp' or 'HSG' for short. An X-ray dye that shows up on X-rays is used.

This examination helps to assess the size and shape of the uterus and also to check whether or not the fallopian tubes are open. Your doctor will have taken into account your symptoms and decided that this is the best examination for your particular problem.

What are the benefits of having a hysterosalpingogram?

This examination shows if there are any blockages in your fallopian tubes and may give some information about your womb which will help your gynaecologist to make a diagnosis about your problem.

**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

How to get ready for your hysterosalpingogram

Important information - chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) and is one of the most common STIs in the UK. You will need to have had a vaginal swab test to check for chlamydia within the last 6 months before an appointment can be booked. If you have not had this test, please contact your GP to arrange this as soon as possible.

You need to be clear of chlamydia when you have your HSG test. If we do not have your results we will not be able to book an appointment for you.

This examination should usually be done within the first 10 days of your menstrual cycle. You will be asked the date of your last menstrual period before the examination starts, so please bring this information with you.

It is very important that there is no possibility of pregnancy at the time of the examination because X-rays may harm an unborn child. You must avoid sexual intercourse between your last period and the examination to avoid any possibility of pregnancy. Before the procedure begins you will be asked to confirm that you are not pregnant.

Some patients find it helpful to take a simple painkiller (such as paracetamol and/ or ibuprofen) 30 minutes before the appointment time. This will not interfere with the test in any way and may help with any discomfort during the examination.

You may find it helpful for someone to drive you home after the examination.

Please bring a sanitary towel with you for use afterwards.

What should I do if I have irregular or absent periods?

If you do not have periods or have irregular periods please tell us by calling the Radiology Department on the telephone number in your appointment letter. You may be asked to contact your referring GP or consultant who might recommend some more tests to make sure you are not pregnant.

What happens during the examination?

When you arrive at the Radiology Department you will be directed to the relevant waiting area. You will be shown to a cubicle, asked to undress and change into a hospital gown.

A member of staff will explain the procedure to you. You will be asked to sign a form to confirm that you are not pregnant. This may happen in the X-ray room and you may ask any questions that you have about the procedure.

You will be taken into the X-ray room and asked to lie on the X-ray table. The member of staff performing the procedure will perform an internal vaginal examination with a speculum and insert a small tube into your cervix. This is similar to having a smear test. You may experience a cramp-like feeling as the tube is inserted.

A small amount of a colourless liquid that shows up on X-rays (contrast liquid) will be introduced to outline the uterus and fallopian tubes. X-ray pictures will be taken at this time.

You may feel some discomfort during this procedure but it is rarely severe. You should tell the member of staff who is with you if it is particularly uncomfortable. You will not be sedated at all.

Who will be doing the examination?

The examination will be performed by a doctor who specialises in diagnosis using X-rays (radiologist), a specialist nurse or specialist radiographer. During the examination there will also be a radiographer and sometimes a nurse or assistant in the room.

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

How long will it take?

This examination takes between 15 to 20 minutes. The time will vary slightly for each patient.

What happens after the examination?

You may be asked to wait in the department for a short time after the examination to make sure that you feel comfortable. Any contrast liquid that remains in your uterus will gradually leak out through your vagina. Any contrast liquid left in your pelvis will be absorbed safely by your body. Only a small amount of contrast is used during the examination and it has no smell or colour.

You may get some cramping after the examination and some minor 'spotting' (light bleeding). Both should settle in a couple of days. You will be provided with a sanitary towel for use afterwards although you may like to bring your own. **Do not use tampons during this time as these can be a source of infection.**

Are there any side effects or complications?

Most women experience only minor side effects. These may include sticky vaginal discharge as some of the fluid drains out of the uterus, slight vaginal bleeding, cramps, feeling dizzy, faint or sick.

Serious problems are rare. They may include an allergic reaction to the contrast liquid, injury to the uterus or pelvic infection. Rarely if you have long term infection of the fallopian tubes the injection of the contrast liquid can make this worse.

You should contact your doctor or call the NHS helpline on 111 if you are unwell after the procedure and in particular if you have any of these symptoms:

- being sick (vomiting)
- fainting

- severe tummy pain or cramping
- heavy vaginal bleeding
- high temperature (fever) or shivering (chills)

How do I get the results?

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

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 that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The risks from radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child so we must ask some patients aged 10 to 55 years about their menstrual periods and possibility of being pregnant.

The radiation from the X-rays during a hysterosalpingogram is equivalent to receiving a few weeks 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.**



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

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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