

Nephrostogram

This leaflet explains more about having a nephrostogram examination, including the benefits, risks and any alternatives. It also provides information on what you can expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a nephrostogram?

A nephrostogram is an examination to check whether your kidney drains adequately into your ureter (the tube connecting the kidney to the bladder) and bladder.

You will already have had a nephrostomy catheter (thin tube) inserted through the skin on your back and into your kidney to drain your urine. This might have been done if your ureter was previously blocked or if your kidney was not draining to the bladder adequately. The nephrostogram will be done to check that any treatment to fix these problems has worked. The radiologist and your doctor will then decide if the nephrostomy catheter can be removed.

The procedure is done by both:

- a radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose and treat illnesses); and
- a radiographer (a health professional that produces the images used to diagnose and treat illnesses).

The procedure uses a type of x-ray called fluoroscopic imaging to view images in real time. An x-ray dye, called contrast, is also used. The contrast dye shows up on the images and allows the radiologist to clearly see and check your internal organs.

What are the benefits – why should I have a nephrostogram?

The nephrostogram is done as a follow up to treatment to check that your kidney is draining adequately. If you have any questions about the exam, please contact your referring doctor.

What are the risks?

This investigation involves exposure to x-rays. X-rays consist of a type of radiation known as ionising radiation. The doses that are used in medical x-rays are very low and the associated risks are minimal. The radiographer is responsible for making sure that your dose is kept as low as possible and that the benefits of having the x-ray outweigh any risk.

The contrast dye that is used contains iodine which some people are allergic to. If you have had an allergic reaction to x-ray contrast in the past or if you have a known allergy to iodine, you must tell your doctor. Alternatively, contact the x-ray department on 020 7188 5527 (for Guy's Hospital) or 020 7188 5490 (for St Thomas' Hospital).

Female patients

X-rays can be harmful for an unborn baby and should be avoided by women who are or may be pregnant. It is recommended that the examination is performed within 10 days of the first day of the onset of your menstrual period. If your appointment is not within this time or if you think you may be pregnant, please contact the x-ray department.

Are there any alternatives to having a nephrostogram?

Alternative imaging may be available, but only if your doctor feels that this is the most appropriate test for you. Please speak to your referring doctor, or to the radiologist on the day of your examination for more information.

How can I prepare for nephrostogram?

There is no specific preparation for this examination. Please arrive promptly for your appointment to help us prevent any delays. Continue to take your medicines as you normally would.

Giving my consent (permission)

We want to involve you in decisions about your care and treatment. If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

If you would like more information about our consent process, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

What happens during the nephrostogram?

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. You may be asked to remove jewellery, dentures, glasses and any metal objects or clothing that might interfere with the x-ray images. Please inform the radiologist of any medications you are taking, or of any severe allergies, recent illnesses or other medical conditions.

You will then be brought into the fluoroscopy room and asked to lie on your side or face down on the x-ray table.

The dressing covering your existing nephrostomy catheter will be removed. Your back and the nephrostomy catheter will be cleaned and draped with sterile towels.

The drainage bag that is attached to the nephrostomy catheter will be disconnected and a syringe of contrast dye will be connected. A small amount of the contrast dye will be passed through the nephrostomy tube and into your kidney. X-ray images will then be taken as the contrast dye passes through your ureter and into your bladder. You may be repositioned so that we can see the area from several angles. The x-ray equipment may also move around you in order to gain the best possible images. The radiologist and radiographer will be with you at all times to assist you.

Once all the x-ray images have been taken the contrast will be drained from your kidney. The nephrostomy catheter will either be reconnected to a drainage bag or the radiologist may remove the nephrostomy catheter. This decision is made by the radiologist and your doctor using information gained from the x-ray images. If you have any questions about this, please ask your doctor or the radiologist on the day.

This examination lasts approximately 20 minutes but may take longer. Please understand that you may have to wait a few minutes during your exam while the images are being checked. It is important that the images contain all the necessary information.

Will I feel any pain?

There may be some discomfort when the contrast dye passes into your kidney but this should not be painful. If you are concerned, please tell the radiologist or radiographer.

What happens after the procedure?

There are no after-effects to the examination. Once you are happy to leave, you are free to do so. Please contact your GP or referring team if you feel unwell in the days following the examination.

When will I get the results?

The images taken during the examination are studied by the radiologist. They will then produce a detailed report and send this to the doctor who referred you for the test. Your referring doctor will then discuss the results with you and any treatment you may need.

You should already have a follow up appointment with the team who referred you. If not, please contact them to arrange one so that you can discuss the results of this test.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your nephrostogram test please contact the X-ray department on **020 7188 5527** at Guy's or **020 7188 5490** at St Thomas', Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 3199/VER3

Date published: April 2017

Review date: April 2020

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