

Patient information factsheet

Having a urethrogram

This factsheet will give you information about having a urethrogram. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have but, if there is anything you do not understand, a member of your healthcare team will be happy to explain further.

What is a urethrogram?

A urethrogram is an x-ray test to examine your urethra (the tube that passes from the bladder through the penis).

The procedure will take place in the radiology department and usually takes approximately 45 minutes but please allow 90 minutes for your appointment.

Preparation for the procedure

No special preparation is needed and you can eat and drink as normal on the day

Please let us know as soon as possible if you have problems standing or transferring from a wheelchair so that we can make arrangements.

You should also let us know if you have had any previous allergic reactions to iodine or x-ray contrast (a liquid that is visible on x-ray). Our telephone number is over the page.

What to bring with you

You might want to bring your own dressing gown, slippers and reading material.

During the procedure

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown before being taken to the examination room where you will be asked to lie on your back on the x-ray table. The radiologist (a doctor who uses x-rays to diagnose illnesses) will clean the genital area before gently inserting a small rubber tube (catheter) into the end of your penis. It will then be inflated slightly to allow it to stay in position. A small amount of x-ray contrast (a liquid which shows up on x-ray) will be passed through your urethra and into your bladder through the catheter.

The catheter will then be removed and you may be asked to empty your bladder while further pictures are taken.

Most people do not find the procedure painful but you may experience some discomfort when the catheter is inserted.

After the procedure

No special care is necessary after the procedure and you can return to your usual daily activities.

If you experience any discomfort urinating, it usually resolves in less than 12 hours. Your urine may also be slightly pink after the test but it is not anything to worry about. You should see your GP if you experience any bleeding or difficulties with passing urine.

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Risks

There is a very small risk of developing a urine infection. You should contact your doctor if you experience abdominal pain, shivers or sweats, or your urine becomes discoloured or smells offensive in the days after the procedure.

There is some exposure to radiation during the procedure because x-rays are used. However, as this is a low dose examination, exposure to radiation is kept to a minimum. Generally, the amount of radiation you are exposed to during this procedure is equivalent to between a few days and a few years of exposure to natural radiation from the environment.

Results

The radiologist will examine the pictures and a report of the findings will be sent to the doctor who requested the procedure. This report should be available at your outpatient follow up appointment.

Further information

Some of your questions should have been answered in this factsheet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you.

It is important that you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure. If you have any questions before or after the examination please telephone the radiology department on 023 8120 4870 from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Useful links

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.