

Your child's loopogram scan

Information for children, families and carers

This factsheet explains what a loopogram scan is and what will happen at your child's appointment, so that you know what to expect and can help prepare your child. We hope it will answer some of the questions you may have. If there is anything you don't understand, a member of your child's healthcare team will be happy to explain further.

What is a loopogram scan?

A loopogram scan is a procedure that uses x-rays to investigate an area of the bowel that has been connected to the skin surface (a stoma). This scan is usually performed to find out why the stoma is not working as well as it should. It is also used to check the loop of bowel before surgically closing the stoma to allow faeces (poo) to be passed out of the body in the usual way (from the bottom).

A loopogram scan will be performed by a radiographer (a person specially trained in taking x-ray images) and a radiologist (a doctor who is specially trained to interpret x-rays).

How does a loopogram scan work?

The procedure uses a special type of x-ray called 'fluoroscopic imaging', which produces real-time moving images of the body (like a film). The moving images will appear on a screen by the bed, which will then be reviewed by a radiologist.

The procedure also uses contrast liquid. The contrast liquid contains iodine which shows up on the images and allows the radiologist to clearly see and check your child's bowel.

How do I prepare my child for a loopogram scan?

Eating and drinking

To allow us to take high-quality images, your child's stomach must be empty for this scan. To make sure their stomach is empty, please follow the guidance below based on your child's age:

If your child is aged one or older:

They must not eat or drink anything for two hours before their scan.

If your child is less than a year old:

Do not feed them for one hour before their scan.

Medications

You should continue to give your child their normal medications.

Allergy to iodine or contrast liquid

Please inform us before the scan if your child has a known allergy to iodine or contrast liquid. Your doctor may prescribe your child medications before the scan to reduce their risk of having an allergic reaction.

Stoma equipment

You will need to bring a fresh stoma bag dressing set and a spare bag with you, so that your child's bag can be changed after their scan.

What will happen before the scan?

Please arrive at the children's x-ray department at the time stated in your child's appointment letter. If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know at least two weeks beforehand (or as soon as you know you are unable to attend) so we can offer the appointment to another child on the waiting list.

As the scan will involve the use of x-rays, we are legally required to ask girls who have started their periods whether there is any chance they could be pregnant. This is to protect unborn babies from receiving unnecessary radiation. We will provide you and your child with a simple questionnaire when you arrive at the department. We will check your child's answers before proceeding with the scan.

Your child will then need to change into a hospital gown and wait in a cubicle until the x-ray room is ready. We recommend talking about the scan with your child while they are waiting to help reduce any anxiety.

Can I stay with my child during the scan?

You are welcome to stay with your child during the scan, but you will need to wear a protective lead apron.

If you are pregnant, we suggest you bring someone else with you, to be with your child during the scan instead, as radiation from the x-rays may be harmful to your unborn baby.

What will happen during the scan?

Before we begin the scan, we will ask some questions to confirm your child's identity and the type of scan being done.

We will then take your child into the x-ray room and ask them to lie down on our x-ray couch. We will remove your child's stoma bag and carefully insert a small, soft catheter (a thin, flexible tube) into their stoma using a lubricant. We will then inject a small amount of contrast liquid. After we have injected the contrast liquid, your child should not experience any further discomfort during the scan.

We may roll your child slightly onto their left and/or right side to allow us to track the contrast liquid while it flows through their large bowel. We may also ask your child to hold their breath and/or remain still for a few seconds to allow us to take clear images. The images we take will appear on a computer screen in the room. We will check that the images contain all the required information before your child leaves the department. This may take up to ten minutes, depending on the number of images to be checked.

How long will the loopogram scan take?

The length of the procedure will vary depending on:

- the age of your child
- how many areas need to be x-rayed

In most circumstances, the entire procedure will take around 30 minutes.

What are the benefits of a loopogram scan?

A loopogram scan makes it possible to see internal organs in motion, which can help us to make a diagnosis. It can also be used to monitor the progress of an existing condition. Your child's doctor or nurse will decide if they might benefit from having a loopogram scan.

What will happen after the scan?

When we have finished the scan, we will put on a fresh stoma bag to catch the contrast liquid as it flows out of your child's bowel. The contrast liquid can feel slightly 'sticky' when it dries on skin, so your child may need to have a warm bath when they get home.

Once dressed, your child will then be able to go home, or return to school or child care, if there is no medical reason for them not to do so.

Are there any risks?

Constipation

Your child should drink plenty of fluids for the first couple of days after the scan to help flush the contrast liquid out of their digestive system to prevent any constipation.

Allergic reaction to iodine or contrast liquid

The risk of a serious allergic reaction to the contrast liquid is rare.

Exposure to radiation

We are all exposed to background radiation on a daily basis. Some of it comes from natural sources and some comes from artificial sources. Natural sources of background radiation include:

- cosmic rays - radiation that reaches the Earth from space
- rocks and soil - some rocks are radioactive and give off radioactive radon gas
- living things - plants absorb radioactive materials from the soil and these pass up the food chain

Generally, the amount of radiation your child will be exposed to during a loopogram scan is equivalent to a few days extra background radiation. Your child will not be exposed to any more x-rays than is absolutely necessary.

Before we carry out any examination using radiation, we will weigh up the benefits of having the examination against the risks of the radiation itself. Exposure to radiation can slightly increase a person's lifetime cancer risk, but for this examination, the risk is very small.

When will I receive my child's results?

We will send your child's results to the clinician who requested the loopogram scan. They will then contact you to discuss the results. If your child's results require urgent attention, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your child's healthcare team who will be happy to explain further.

If you have any questions before the examination, please telephone the children's radiology department.

Telephone: **023 8120 4429** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm)

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