

Having a Sialogram

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming test and contains answers to many of the common questions. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

Radiologists are doctors specially trained to interpret the images and carry out more complex examinations. They are supported by Radiographers who are highly trained to carry out x-rays and other imaging procedures.

What is a sialogram?

A sialogram is a dye investigation of a salivary gland. It is carried out to look in detail at the larger salivary glands, namely the parotid or submandibular glands. These glands drain saliva into your mouth through small tubes (ducts). The parotid duct opens on the inside of the cheek next to the upper back teeth. The submandibular duct opens on the inside of the mouth under the tongue immediately behind the lower front teeth.

Why do I need a sialogram?

To investigate potential blockage of the salivary ducts.

What are the options or alternatives?

This is the most reliable way of viewing the small ducts from your salivary glands.

Alternate options for imaging the salivary glands include ultrasound and MRI. Your doctor will decide on the best tests to investigate your specific symptoms.

Who will be performing the sialogram?

A specially trained doctor called a Radiologist. Radiologists have special expertise in using x-ray and ultrasound scanning equipment, and also in interpreting the images produced. They need to look at these images while carrying out the procedure.

Radiographers and Radiology Nurses will be present in the room to assist during the procedure; they will introduce themselves at the start.

Occasionally student Radiographers or Medical Students may be present to observe.

Where will the sialogram take place?

Generally, in the Medical Imaging Department.

How do I prepare?

You may eat, drink and continue to take any medication prior to your sialogram. No other preparation is necessary.

What actually happens during a sialogram?

The Radiologist (X-ray doctor) who performs your sialogram will pass a small plastic tube into the duct of the salivary gland under investigation. The tube is blunt and therefore this part of the investigation is not particularly painful and does not require a local anaesthetic injection. Once this tube is in the correct position dye will be injected through it into the saliva gland. This takes a few minutes. The tube is then removed and x-ray pictures are taken.

Will it hurt?

A sialogram is painless although you may experience some minor discomfort as the duct is cannulated.

How long will it take?

It usually takes around 30 minutes to perform the investigation from start to finish but it is important to remember that just because a sialogram takes a little longer it does not necessarily mean that there is something wrong.

What happens afterwards?

As long as you feel all right you will be able to leave immediately.

Are there any risks or complications?

Any discomfort in your salivary gland should wear off shortly after. There is a small risk of introducing infection. If your salivary gland becomes more painful, swollen or red and inflamed you should contact your GP.

Finally...

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure, before you sign the consent form.

Contact us

If you found reading your leaflet difficult, you do not understand what it means for you or if you have any queries or concerns you can contact us on: **01392 402336** and we can talk it through or alternatively you can email us rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net

How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, please visit our website:

www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/radiology-x-ray-and-medical-imaging

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