Fistulogram and Fistuloplasty

Radiology Service

Information for patients

**What is a fistulogram?**
An fistulogram is a procedure performed to examine your fistula. Using x-ray contrast dye and x-ray guidance, a fistulogram provides information about your fistula and any abnormalities such as narrowings or blockages which may then be treated.

**What is a fistuloplasty?**
If any have any narrowings or blockages in your fistula you may require a fistuloplasty. This involves using a special balloon to widen the narrowed vessel to improve blood flow. It is usually performed at the same time as your fistulogram if it is required.

**What to Bring:**
Bring any relevant imaging scans (film packet or a CD containing X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound or MRIs etc.)

**Preparation:**
You will be required to have a blood test prior to your procedure to check your kidney function and blood clotting levels.

At the time of booking and when you attend your procedure, tell staff if you have any allergies, have had a previous reaction to an x-ray dye or if you have kidney disease. This ensures that the appropriate measures are taken to carry out the procedure with maximum safety.

Arrange for someone to take you home from your procedure and stay with you overnight.

**Eating/ drinking:**
You will be required not to eat or drink for 4 hours prior to your procedure.

**Medications:**
Tell staff at the time of booking if you are taking any:

- Blood thinning medications (e.g. Warfarin, Xarelto, Rivaroxaban, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis),
- Antiplatelet medications (e.g. Clopidogrel, Plavix, Aspirin)
- Diabetic medication containing metformin.

You will be informed if you need to stop taking these medications before your procedure.

Continue taking other medications as prescribed, unless directed otherwise by medical or nursing staff prior to your procedure.

Please bring a list of all your medications with you to your appointment.

**Procedure:**
On arrival to the hospital a nurse will discuss with you your medical history and insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein in your hand or arm.
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The doctor will explain the procedure and discuss with you the potential risks and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

During the procedure you will be lying on a bed in the angiography room. Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored during the procedure by nursing staff. You may also be given medication to keep you comfortable and relaxed if you require it.

Your fistula will be cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin. A small incision will be made and a small needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into your fistula. A thin plastic tube called a sheath is then inserted and the needle is removed. You may feel some slight pressure when inserting the sheath but it shouldn’t be painful.

The doctor will then use x-ray contrast dye to examine the blood vessels in your fistula. If an angioplasty is required, a thin balloon will be inserted into the narrowed or blocked blood vessel and slowly inflated to widen the blood vessel and improve blood flow.

The sheath will then be removed and the doctor will apply pressure to the puncture site to stop any bleeding which may occur. A small waterproof dressing will then be placed over the puncture site.

Post Procedure Care:
You will be transferred to the day recovery unit where you will be monitored by nursing staff. You will be required to remain in bed for the duration of your recovery which is generally 2 hours, before being discharged home.

Discharge
Generally you will be able to go home the same day as your procedure if you have no other medical conditions/concerns that require treatment.

You will be provided with an information sheet regarding discharge instructions upon completion of your procedure.

Results:
The results together with the procedure report will be sent to your referring doctor.
Return to your doctor to discuss examination results.

Radiation Risk
Most medical imaging tests, except MRI and ultrasound, involve exposure to radiation from X-rays. Your doctor considers that the benefits of the examination you require to be greater than the small risk posed by the radiation exposure.

Contact information
Ph: (03) 9076 2963
Email: radiologybookings@alfred.org.au

Radiology – the Alfred
55 Commercial Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
T 03 9076 2000
alfredhealth.org.au

References
Inside Radiology: www.insideradiology.com.au
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists®

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