Percutaneous Transhepatic Cholangiography (PTC)

Information for patients

What is a PTC?
A PTC is a procedure performed under x-ray guidance to examine your bile ducts. The bile ducts are tubes that release bile to your gallbladder and small intestines. Bile helps break down or digest fats in your food. This procedure is performed if your doctor suspects you have a narrowing or blockage of your bile ducts which is causing your symptoms. The procedure is usually performed under a general anaesthesia so you will not be awake for the procedure.

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.

Tell staff at the time of booking and when you attend your procedure 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 upon discharge from hospital.

Eating/ drinking:
You will be required not to eat or drink for 6 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.
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Radiology Service

**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. 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.

Your abdomen will be cleaned with an antiseptic wash, and local anaesthetic will be used to numb a small section of skin on your abdomen. A small incision will be made and a small needle will be inserted through the numb patch of skin into the bile ducts. An x-ray dye will be injected into the bile ducts to assess if there are any narrowings or blockages. A blockage or narrowing can be treated by placing a thin plastic drain tube into the bile duct or by placing a stent, a small metal tube, to widen the narrowing allowing the bile to drain.

Once completed, the drain tube will be secured with a dressing and left in place to drain.

**Post Procedure Care:**
You will be required to **lie flat for 4 hours** after your procedure to prevent bleeding from the puncture site. You will be transferred to the ward where you will be monitored closely by nursing staff.

The drain tube will remain in place for a short period of time post procedure. Your doctor will determine and discuss with you when it can be removed.

**Discharge**
Your doctor will discuss discharge arrangements with you depending on what treatment you have had.

**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.

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

If you would like to provide feedback or request this information in an alternative format, contact us at patient.information@alfred.org.au