

# Fistulogram

## Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by:* Diagnostic Imaging and Department of Nephrology  
*Designed by:* Nova Scotia Health Library Services

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- All X-rays expose you to some radiation. The amount of radiation depends on the test. The length of time and amount of radiation exposure is controlled and kept as low as possible.

### **When will I get the results?**

The results of your test will be available the next day. Your nephrologist (kidney doctor) or nurse practitioner will talk with you about the results of the test.

**Call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) if you have any of the following symptoms:**

- › Pain that is getting worse
- › Swelling at or near the insertion site
- › Bleeding from your fistula or graft

**If you cannot reach them, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

## What will happen after the test?

- You will be able to go home or to the Dialysis Unit. Staff will tell you where to go.
- You may eat and drink as usual.
- You can go back to your usual activities on the day after the test.

## What are the risks of this test?

The risks of this test can include, but are not limited to:

- Common risks
  - › Minor pain, bruising, and/or infection from the I.V. needle
- Less common risks
  - › Allergic reaction to the X-ray dye

## Signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction:

- › Rash
- › Hives (upset stomach)
- › Itching
- › Fainting
- › Shortness of breath
- Your health care team may give you medication to help with a possible allergic reaction.
- **The X-ray dye we use is very safe. Serious reactions during or after a fistulogram are very rare.**

# Fistulogram

## What is a fistulogram?

A fistulogram is a special X-ray that shows any narrowing(s) in your dialysis access (fistula or graft).

## How is the test done?

- A colourless contrast (X-ray dye) will be injected (put) into your blood vessels using an intravenous (I.V.). The dye will help your health care team see your fistula or graft.
- The test will take about 15 to 30 minutes.

### My appointment:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you cannot keep your appointment, please call the dialysis nurse or the booking office right away so that another patient can be booked in your time slot:**

› Phone: 902-473-5477

## Who will do my fistulogram?

An interventional radiologist (doctor who specializes in X-rays) will do the test. A nurse and an X-ray technologist will also be in the room.

## Where is the test done?

- > X-ray Department
- > 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Dickson Building
- > Victoria General site, QE II

## • Please arrive 30 minutes before your appointment time.

- Go directly to the X-ray Department. **Do not** register at a kiosk on the main level.

## How do I get ready?

- You **do not** need to take a day off from work or school for this test.
- Bring your provincial health insurance (MSI) card with you.
- You may eat and drink as usual.
- Take your usual medication(s).
- If you are pregnant, tell your referring doctor (the doctor who sent you for this test) and the radiologist.

- If you have an allergy to X-ray dye, tell your referring doctor and the radiologist.

## What will happen during the test?

- The radiologist will explain the test. They will then ask you to review and sign a consent form. If you have any questions, please ask.
- You will be taken into the X-ray room and asked to lie on the table.
- A small I.V. needle will be inserted into your fistula or graft (insertion site).
- A blood pressure cuff will be put on your fistula arm for a short time to help with the test.
- The radiologist will inject a dye through your I.V. When the dye is injected, you may have a warm feeling. This will only last for a few seconds.
- The X-ray technologist will take X-rays.
- After the X-rays are taken, your I.V. will be taken out. This will not hurt. The radiologist will apply pressure and put on a bandage to prevent bleeding.